Chicago's Cops Fight for Steel *George Robbins*

NEW MASSES

JUNE 15, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

HOW CLOSE IS WORLD WAR?

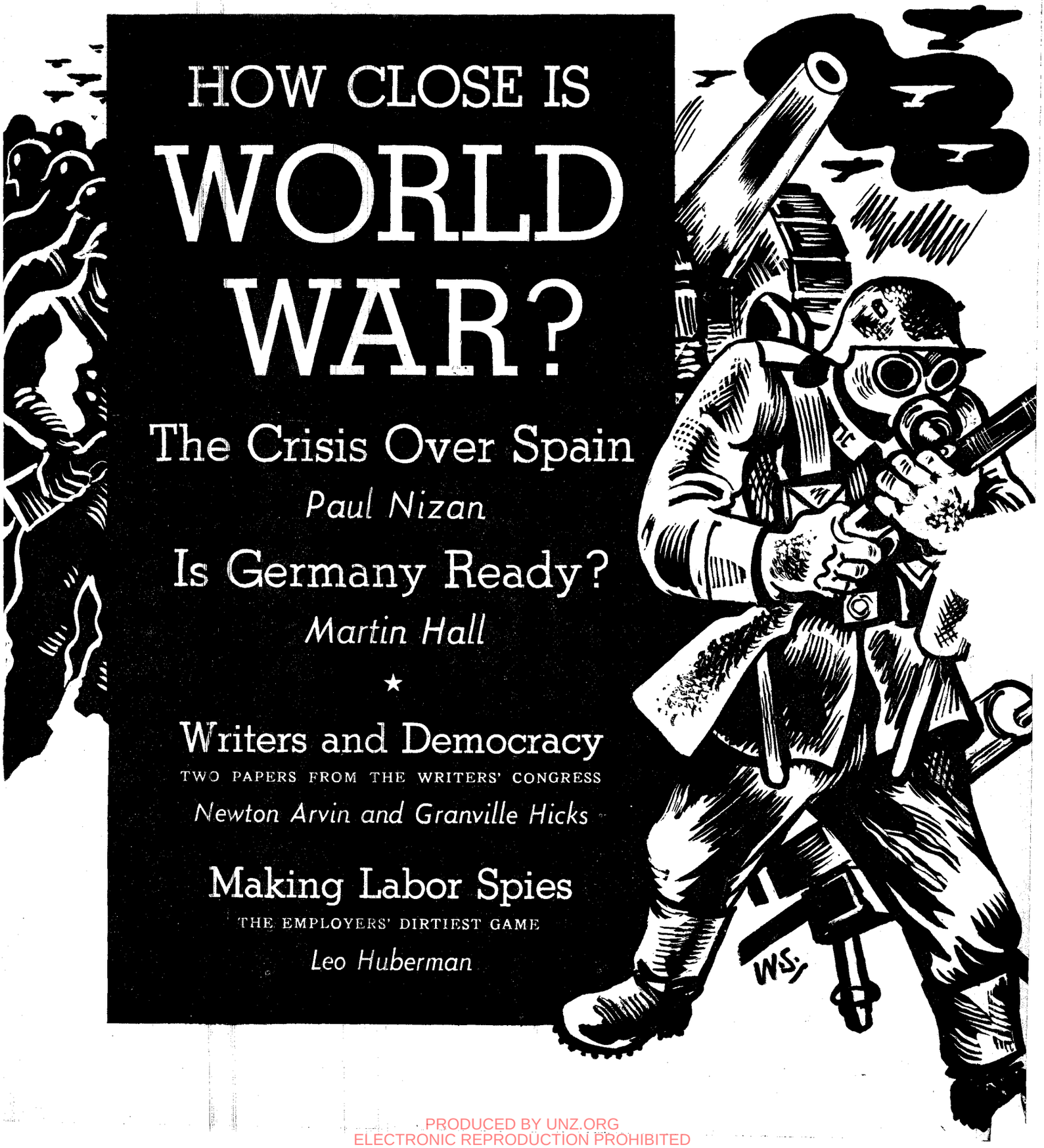
The Crisis Over Spain
Paul Nizan

Is Germany Ready?
Martin Hall

★

Writers and Democracy
TWO PAPERS FROM THE WRITERS' CONGRESS
Newton Arvin and Granville Hicks

Making Labor Spies
THE EMPLOYERS' DIRTIEST GAME
Leo Huberman



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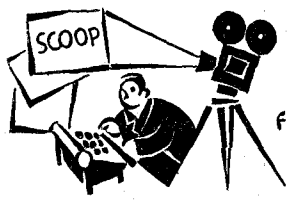
BETWEEN OURSELVES

BEFORE you do anything else, turn to the back cover of this issue, read it, and act. The situation could not be more serious.

We like to crow as well as the next fellow, and so we'll gently draw attention to the fact that the NEW MASSES was the first publication to print the



story of the wild Hollywood party where Patricia Douglas says she was raped and from which Ginger Wyatt says she was rescued by Wallace Beery. Moreover, we are still one of the few papers who have dared to say that the party was for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's selling agents; most of the papers are still referring to "a leading motion-picture studio," etc. It was correspondent Edward Newhouse who told the story, in his "Hollywood on Strike" article in our May 18 issue. That story quoted one of the technicians on the picket line as follows:

"I have a lot of reasons for being here. Listen carefully and I'll explain some of them. Last night my girl gets a call to report at the Hal Roach studios for work in an evening gown. She's an extra. So she meets a bunch of the girls and they're piled into a bus. There some of the other girls tell her they're really going to a party out at the Hal Roach ranch, two hundred and fifty of them at $7.50 apiece. The M.G.M. convention was in town and the boys were going to have themselves a stag. So they get out there and the party's in full swing.

"Plenty of champagne and music and ...an entertainers. Plenty of Scotch ...ugh stuff. Now most of those ... over twenty-one, and some... ...o doesn't know the set-up ... would think they knew better. ... they're picture girls and they know ... it means not to answer a call, ...n if it doesn't come through Cen...ral Casting. So there's girls all over the place, girls drunk and girls crying, fighting off guys or going off into rooms, and pretty soon my girl gets sick of it and phones me to pick her up. So I go out there and force my way in, and a more disgraceful scene I never hope to see. People sprawled all over, clutching bottles. I couldn't begin to tell you about the place. They must have blown in all of $20,000 on that party, and all the big shots there, Hal Roach and Joe Cohen and the rest. So on my way out I hit a guy who said something dirty about the strike. My girl kept crying all the w... home."

...d Newhouse writes that someone ...nected with the strike had the NEW ...ASSES article mimeographed and dis...ributed broadcast under the head...ng "The Truth About the Strike."

Who's Who

PAUL NIZAN is the Paris correspondent of the NEW MASSES. A philosopher and historian of great reputation, he is now a member of the foreign editorial staff of *L'Humanité*, organ of the French Communist Party. . . . Martin Hall is one of the editors of the *Deutsche Volksecho*, German-language anti-fascist weekly recently launched in this country. . . . George Robbins has written for us before, his most recent article being "No Waiting for Lefty," an account of the Chicago *taxi strike*. He is a member of the Chicago branch of the National Research League. . . . Granville Hicks was formerly literary editor of the NEW MASSES. He is now at work on a critical study of British literature. His article in this issue, along with that of Newton Arvin, was an address given at the second Congress of American Writers which was held in New York, June 4-6. . . . Mr. Arvin has written a life of Hawthorne and is now working on a similar study of Walt Whitman. . . . Leo Huberman's series was issued in two installments after being announced for three, which was achieved by running the second and third parts together in this issue. It was incorrectly stated last week that Mr. Huberman's book *We the People* was the February selection of the Book Union; his *Man's Worldly Goods* was the February Book Union choice. . . . Kenneth Burke, author of *Permanence and Change*, will shortly bring out his *Aspects of History*. . . . Ella Winter, who has been a frequent contributor to the NEW MASSES as well as a frequent visitor to the Soviet Union, is the author of *Red Virtue*, a study of women under the Soviets. . . . Philip Carter is a member of the philosophy department in a college in New York City.

What's What

WE ARE pleased to be able to announce for next week two more of the papers which were read at the Writers' Congress last week-end. One is that of Ernest Hemingway, who refers to his experiences in Spain in discussing the writer's problem, and the other is by Archibald MacLeish, poet and one of the editors of *Fortune*. The week after, we will publish our first article by G. D. H. Cole, English political scientist, who has written at our request an analysis of British policy in respect to Spain.

Mr. MacLeish, by the way, is only one of several NEW MASSES contributors who are participating in "The American Troubadour Hour," a new radio series under the sponsorship of the Radio Division of the Federal Theatre Project and directed by Alfred Kreymborg. The hour consists of readings and interviews by and with contemporary American poets, and of dramatizations of episodes from the lives of past and present American poets. Besides Mr. MacLeish, the others who have agreed to participate include: Genevieve Taggard, Maxwell Bodenheim, Carl Carmer, Horace Gregory, James Weldon Johnson, Allen Tate, John Hall Wheelock, Mark Van Doren, Robinson Jeffers, Ridgeley Torrence, and others.

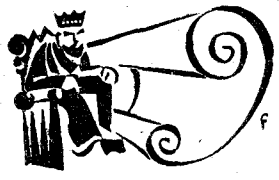
When anybody offers a $2000 prize for anything, there is likely to be some action—which is just what the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union reports in its play contest, for which $2000 is the first prize, and $1000 the second prize. About two hundred manuscripts have been received in response to the union's call for plays which must be "full-length, original, and have for their subject social conflicts in contemporary American society." The contest, which closes July 15, places no restrictions on the author's rights to his own play, and even the winning ones do not become the property of the union.

If you're interested in seeing a "fast, funny, furious, musical exposé of the leading citizens of Steeltown"—and at the same time help your favorite magazine (guess which!)—write or phone in now, those of you who live within commuting distance of New York, making reservations for *The Cradle Will Rock*, by Marc Blitzstein, who has written music commentaries for this magazine in the past. It's to be on Saturday night, June 19, at the Maxine Elliott theater, with Orson Welles, of *Dr. Faustus* fame, directing.

Our regrets for an error in last week's Flashbacks which was not the fault of the author. Thomas Paine died not in New Rochelle, but in Greenwich Village, then outside New York City.

Flashbacks

"OUR slavery has been exchanged for an apprenticeship to liberty, which has aggravated the painful feelings of our social degradation by adding to them the sickening of still deferred hope," read the first Chartist petition for the "enfranchisement of the masses" which was presented to the British Parliament June 14, 1839. The following day, Britishers celebrated the anniversary of another great charter. The Bill of Rights, or Magna Charta, was secured from King John,



June 15, 1215. . . . And while we are looking at bright spots in Britain's dark ages, we might note that Wat Tyler, perennial symbol of revolt, led a mass delegation of peasants to King Richard, June 14, 1381, and won concessions which were that day embodied in charters. On June 15, the Lord Mayor of London killed Wat Tyler. . . . "War: Its Cause and Its Makers," the clear, militant speech delivered by Eugene V. Debs, June 16, 1918: "War does not come by chance." Proof that this doctrine was unwelcome to supporters of the war appeared in no uncertain terms. The courts clapped Debs into prison with a ten-year sentence for treason.

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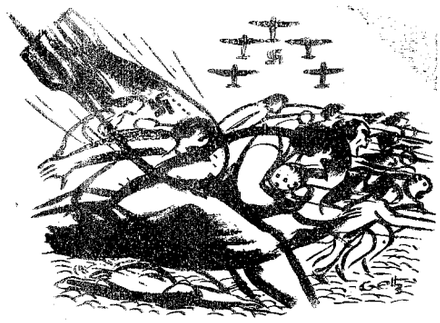
JUNE 15, 1937



Arthur Getz

The War Crisis over Spain

An editor of "L'Humanite" analyzes the significance of the Geneva and London reaction to fascist policy

By Paul Nizan

THE facts of the case are clear. The Council of the League of Nations, after Alvarez del Vayo stood his ground in defense of the rights of the legitimate government of Spain, had just voted a resolution which acknowledged the failure of the Non-Intervention Committee and expressed regret at the foreign intervention.

Thereupon Europe was shaken by the grave German-Spanish incident which followed—loyalist airplanes bombed the German pocket battleship *Deutschland*. The next day, as reprisal, the companion ship *Admiral Scheer*, with a small squadron, shelled the city of Almeria. Women and children were killed during the bombardment, which began without warning. Then followed the negotiations.

Two themes predominated. Most attention was centered on the bombardment of Almeria and the conditional withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the London Non-Intervention Committee.

It might seem that the essential point was the first. The bombardment of Almeria constituted a patent act of war by Germany against Spain. The world was confronted here with a perfectly defined aggression. The procedure outlined in the Covenant of the League could now be set in motion. Neither London nor Paris, which play the basic role in the London Committee and at Geneva, entered upon this path. As a matter of fact, the minimum action would have been at least a formal "diplomatic" condemnation of the Third Reich. But London, which since the coronation conversations with Germany and von Blomberg's visit is working once more for a rapprochement with the Nazis, sets this alignment far above all considerations of justice. The Quai d'Orsay took a similar position in the matter.

The chancelleries therefore refused to examine the basis of the Spanish-German incident. The Spanish government declared that the anti-aircraft guns of the *Deutschland* had opened fire first on the republican planes, which merely replied. It emphasized that the *Deutschland*, a control vessel, had no "legitimate" mission to fulfill in Iviza, where the bombing took place. The French and English diplomats simply did not examine these very precise accusations. Everything continued as if London and Paris, while of course deploring the violence of the German reprisals, fundamentally admitted their legitimacy and considered that there had been a provocation on the part of the Spanish government. This, fundamentally, is the shame and scandal of London and Paris in the Almeria episode.

The second point, the resignation of Germany and Italy from the Non-Intervention Committee, then received sole consideration. Rome and Berlin sought certain conditions for their return. The two governments demanded that if any incident similar to that of the *Deutschland* should again take place, all vessels on patrol duty would then act as a unit.

It was upon this basis that the negotiations opened. The English government proposed a new plan of naval control by which Salamanca and Valencia would allot security zones to the control ships. In case of an incident, the commanders of the four nations in charge of control (France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy) would discuss the reparations to be demanded of the republican or insurgent government. Berlin replied that it would accept the first point. It rejected the second point and demanded that reprisals should follow immediately upon any incident without any preliminary consultations among the major States. Berlin therefore wants London and Paris to recognize beforehand the right to repeat the bombardment of Almeria.

This is going a little far, and no matter how conciliatory the French and British foreign offices are towards the two fascist states, it would seem difficult for them to go to such lengths.

Therefore, things are now at a stalemate. There was, of course, a solution, which lay in recognition of the aggression against Spain. In France, it was thought that the United States would do this by applying the Neutrality Act against the Third Reich. This great hope was swiftly disappointed.

Spain is waiting for greater justice. Giral, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated June 6 that "we are not expecting much from the Non-Intervention Committee, which has so often done us harm. But we want the truth about the Almeria aggression to be known to the entire world, and we are ready to accept the intervention of the World Court to inquire into the aggression of *Deutschland* against the planes."

It seems that the German attack was a military and diplomatic display designed to restore the upper hand held by the rebels in Spain before the loyalist victories on various fronts of the war turned the tide in favor of the republic. Everyone knows that the German and Italian admiralties accepted the control plan because they saw in it a new opportunity to collaborate with the insurgents. Experience has shown that this collaboration has not prevented the republicans from proving their superiority. Hence the fomenting of incidents every time that the rebels have been in difficulties during the past eleven months. Each time the diplomatic action of the London Committee has restored the balance in their favor.

Are we going to witness this maneuver once again? This is the grave question which the world is confronted with in the Almeria incident.

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Is Germany Ready for War?

The shelling of Almeria and the dispatching of a sizable fleet to Spain raise some questions about the state of preparations

By Martin Hall

LONG before a German naval squadron pumped hot shell into the streets of Almeria, indications were not lacking that Spain had become the focal point in Nazi international policy. For many months, the pros and cons of Nazi intervention had undergone vigorous debate among the people, within the government, and among the army leaders. In some key respects, the reactions to the Spanish conflict in these quarters provide a reliable barometer of the general state of affairs and opinion within Germany itself in respect to the future development of Nazi domestic and foreign policy.

The general press, both in Europe and America, has made a fetish of the idea that Germany is not prepared to wage war. From this followed the comforting illusion that the Nazis would not resort to war. If anything else was needed, the destruction of Almeria by Nazi gunners should go far to dispel this dangerous deception. The Nazis are prepared to begin war at this very moment. Whether it will be possible for them to emerge from a great war victorious is another question for which there is good reason to answer in the negative. The wrath of the people will end [illegible] war, though it is unlikely, as things stand [illegible], that it is enough to prevent its outbreak. [illegible]order to estimate properly the reaction [illegible]German people to Hitler's intervention we must bear in mind that the Nazi [illegible]s prepared for intervention for [illegible]s. But for the first time since Hitler came to power, the Nazis undertook a political act of major importance without being able to employ their usual propaganda technique for creating favorable mass sentiment. Diplomatic reasons originally compelled the German government to conceal its active instigation of the rebellion and its military aid to Franco. This made it impossible from the very beginning for Goebbels's propaganda ministry to apply its usual tricks for rousing mass enthusiasm.

Previous experience was useless in this instance. The Nazis had dared to stir up popular feeling in favor of the Rhine occupation without giving a thought to diplomatic considerations because they had correctly estimated the weakness of the French and British governments. But they could not risk this method in the case of Spain. They knew perfectly well that German interests in Spain had never been of sufficiently national character to rouse the people to patriotic fervor. Now there was no German territory to be "liberated," and no German colony to be regained. German big business had only two real interests in Spain. One was to exploit the raw materials there; the other was to encircle France as a prelude to a German attack. And this precisely was the catch. The propaganda ministry could not openly admit either of these reasons.

For the most part, the Nazi leaders have exploited the argument that the insurgents deserved German assistance because Spain had gone "Communist" in the last election. In effect, the Nazi propaganda machine has tried to project into Spain the methods whereby the Nazis themselves came to power in Germany. After four years of cohabitation with Hitlerism, the German workers have progressively grown immune to this type of propaganda, though the chief means of showing disaffection is still passive. In respect to Spain, however, many active steps of solidarity with the Spanish loyalists must be recorded.

At the very outbreak of the conflict, collections of money were made in behalf of Spanish democracy in many plants in the great German industrial centers. Under present conditions in Germany, this was an act of heroic self-sacrifice. In the large Siemens munitions factories of Berlin and, later, in the Opel auto works at Frankfurt, workers were arrested for collecting funds. They were the first victims, but their fate did not halt the campaign. Collections for Spain became so widespread in the factories of the Ruhr district that the Gestapo became frantic. It made wholesale arrests among the Ruhr workers, particularly the miners. Heavy prison sentences were handed out. In Düsseldorf, the Gestapo adopted special methods to trap the workers. Stool-pigeons were sent to miners' homes while the men were away at work. Pretending to raise money for Spain, the provocateurs appealed to the wives. Wherever the women responded to these appeals, they and their husbands were immediately arrested. Obviously the Nazi authorities regarded collections for Spain with great seriousness, but the chief result of their repressive measures was to strengthen the campaign among the workers.

H. Ludwig

Then something equally significant happened. The voice of German labor was actually heard in the Nazi press. In April of this year, the Nazi editors of the *Ruhrarbeiter,* official Labor Front organ, complained editorially about "a pile" of disturbing letters which they had been getting from the workers in the district. The editors decided that "one must have the courage to take a stand on this problem." In this heroic mood they published three letters from Ruhr workers. Two of these protested against false reports in the Nazi press about low wages in the U.S.S.R. and about alleged G.P.U. atrocities; the third letter protested Nazi propaganda against Spain.

"All the papers," this letter said, "are writing about 'Red incendiary murderers in Spain.' This is not good because every exploited worker, being deprived of all his rights, takes this as an insult to himself. When one writes about Spain, one should first of all explain the reasons for these happenings. Then an honest worker will not feel insulted." Upon this the Nazi editors commented: "And here we editors stand like simpletons!"

The secrecy with which the Nazi authorities surround their Spanish adventure has resulted in large demonstrations in front of Nazi offices and of local Reichswehr headquarters. One such demonstration took place last January in Munich, another several weeks later in Düsseldorf. In both instances, women demonstrated against sending their husbands and sons to Spain as soldiers of the Reichswehr or as members of Nazi military units of the S.A. and S.S. A third demonstration of women took place in Hamburg, where a hospital had been established for wounded German soldiers brought back from Spain. The authorities made every effort to keep this hospital secret. But the story leaked out. Soon hundreds of women who had received no news from relatives fighting in Spain assembled in front of the hospital. They demanded permission to enter; they wanted to see whether their husbands, sons, or brothers were among the wounded. But Nazi police appeared on the scene and drove them back.

There have been other demonstrations, some of them open, for loyalist Spain. One of these was staged in front of the government

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unemployment office in Ratibor, upper Silesia. Here a group of jobless workers erected a loudspeaker through which they shouted: "Long live the people's front! Down with Franco!" Four of them were arrested and imprisoned.

The government has not succeeded in concealing the heavy losses of German troops in Spain, but it keeps on trying to maintain secrecy. Relatives of a soldier killed in Spain receive only a brief notice from the military authorities saying that he was killed "in an accident during maneuvers" in Germany. Then an agent of the relief bureau for war victims visits the bereaved family. He warns them that they are forbidden to make the notice public or to wear mourning. If they violate this order, they will not only be severely punished, but will not receive the small pension due to families of soldiers killed in pursuance of their duties. Naturally, in spite of such threats, cases of this kind cannot be kept secret.

SUCH ARE THE REACTIONS of large sections of the German people to Spain. The army presents another picture. German military experts looked on Spain as a wonderful opportunity for testing the practical value of their war machines. German pilots ruthlessly bombed Guernica to test the efficiency of a concentrated air attack on a relatively small town in the shortest possible time. Moreover, Goering has issued an order that every German military aviator must have four weeks' "practical" training on the Spanish front.

About six weeks ago, a very pessimistic report was brought back to Berlin. Its author and bearer was General Faupel, officially German ambassador to the Franco "government," actually commander-in-chief of the German forces in Spain. Faupel's report shocked the Nazi government and the general staff of the Reichswehr. His flat assertion that the German planes were inferior to the loyalist models resulted in an order to halt temporarily all production of airplanes and tanks of the series used in Spain until certain changes in construction can be worked out.

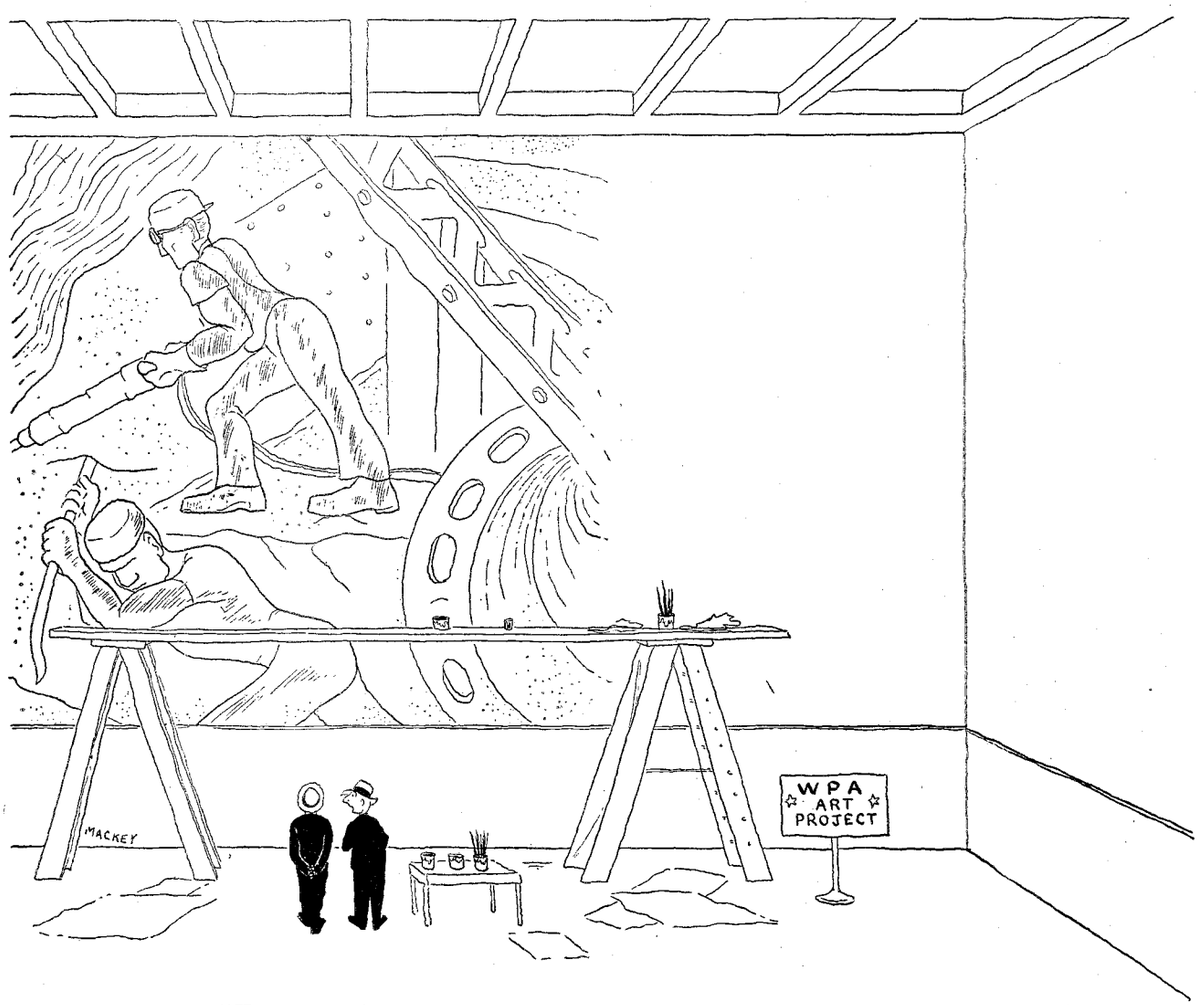
These reactions of some influential military authorities to Spain have had important political aspects. The Reichswehr and admiralty officials for some time have maintained that German rearmament is not yet developed enough to risk a general conflict in Spain. It is this disagreement which led to the resignation of Admiral Foerster as chief of the German fleet; he felt he could no longer assume responsibility for sending such large naval units away from home ports.

One of the most serious apprehensions of the military authorities is based on the reactions of the German civilian population to the Spanish civil war. A highly reliable source reports that in a discussion with the cabinet in March, General von Fritsch emphasized the gravity of civilian opposition to Hitler's Spanish adventure. He warned that in event of war, the Nazi Labor Front could not sufficiently influence the workers to guarantee their faithful obedience as the trade unions had done in 1914.

Even more profound fears are expressed in a book recently published by General von Metzsch, a leading military authority. This book is entitled *The Only Protection Against Defeat,* and was brought out by the house of Ferdinand Hirt in Breslau. Issued by von Metzsch with the consent of his superiors, the book created a sensation in those sections of Berlin which follow military affairs. The author urges that if a catastrophic collapse behind the lines is to be avoided in the case of a military defeat, then the German population must be much better prepared for the effects of war, and even for the eventuality of some military failures. Von Metzsch argues that optimism and confidence can be indulged in only if they are "well protected against surprises, which in a war might be so overwhelming and nerve-racking that they would surpass human endurance."

General von Metzsch went even further. He stated with extraordinary frankness the fear with which Germany's military leaders regard the revolutionary effect of mass resistance to war. In one passage he says: "War is an instrument of politics. This instrument cannot be played any more without revolutionary overtones No warfare, at leas Europe, is concei any longer wit spark of Marxism ing up here and t into an immense Hatred of all that is anti-Marxian is so world-wide that we would be bitterly disappointed if we were led to believe that a future war could remain untouched by disturbances from the depths of the people."

These considerations did not deter the highest leaders of the German government from plunging Europe in a first-rate war crisis by a shocking exhibition of militaristic arrogance outside the bay of Almeria. They probably will not deter them from embarking on their "great war." But they will have a decisive bearing on the outcome.



"The rest of the appropriation got earmarked for a battleship."

John Mackey

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Scott Johnston

KING CANUTE FORD STAYS THE DEEP

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Editor JOSEPH FREEMAN — *Managing Editor* ALEXANDER TAYLOR

Associate Editors
THEODORE DRAPER, F. W. DUPEE, CROCKETT JOHNSON, EDWIN ROLFE

Contributing Editors
ROBERT FORSYTHE, MICHAEL GOLD, HORACE GREGORY, GRANVILLE HICKS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, LOREN MILLER, BRUCE MINTON, WALTER RALSTON, ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Business and Circulation Manager
GEORGE WILLNER

Advertising Manager
ERIC BERNAY

★

Save the New Masses!

WE urge all our friends to read our appeal on the back cover of this issue. An emergency exists involving the very life of the NEW MASSES. Next week's issue depends on *your* response to this week's appeal.

The Catholic Crisis

EARLY in May, the French Catholic newspaper, *Sept,* wrote that "to condemn communism and nevertheless to treat Communists with goodness and sympathy are two things which are not mutually exclusive. This is very true in Germany at the moment, where the Communists are being bloodily persecuted. For the most part these Communists are men who are suffering and making great sacrifices for their ideals."

The writer of these lines supplied an excellent text on the persecution of the German Catholics. Substitute "catholicism and Catholics" for "communism and Communists" and the statement is just as apt. "Bloodily persecuted" and "men who are suffering and making great sacrifices for their ideals" describes German Catholics as well as Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists.

The Nazi regime cannot escape full responsibility for the street attack by Hitler youth groups against Catholic youth as the latter were coming out of a Munich church after St. Boniface services. It was to be expected that the Nazi strong-arm squads would resort to force against devout Catholics as a result of the inflammatory propaganda against Catholic "immorality" by Goebbels's "enlightenment" ministry.

There are still many Catholics in the United States who have not shaken off the illusion that the Nazis would not dare to put their co-religionists on the same plane of brutal repression as the left-wing parties. A Catholic magazine, like the *Commonweal,* stages a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden against the Spanish loyalists but rarely ever makes even editorial objection to the plight of the Catholics in Germany.

The German Catholics know better. They know that the Nazi greed for power is insatiable, that it cannot be appeased by failure to take a forthright stand. Whether they like it or not, the Nazis force the issue, even to open street fighting. As a result, Catholic resistance in Germany becomes stronger daily. "For the most part these Catholics are men who are suffering and making great sacrifices for their ideals."

Cold Steel

THUS far the spotlight has fallen on Chicago as the focal point of labor's struggle against the independent steel companies. Tom Girdler's criminal efforts to prevent collective bargaining will serve to keep Republic Steel in the headlines. But there are many other vital sectors—Youngstown, Niles, Warren—steel plants scattered through five states where determined workers have struck. Twenty-seven plants and about eighty thousand employees are involved in the C.I.O.'s fight for organization.

There is trouble brewing on many of these fronts, and strikers have begun to feel the weight of various pressure outfits. Vigilante groups are forming, designed to raise the "Red" scare against labor spokesmen. "Back to Work" committees (with quarters in local banks) are signing up so-called "loyal employees." In spite of this intimidation, strikers everywhere are showing courage and solidarity that match the heroism of Chicago's martyrs. And their bosses are not making steel.

Youngstown Sheet & Tube, with five plants and 23,500 men, is shut down. Inland's two mills, employing 11,500, are closed. Republic Steel has closed sixteen plants employing 44,000 workers. Mr. Girdler claims that his company is operating at 40 percent of capacity. Labor spokesmen laugh at this assertion, and pickets say that tar is being burned in Republic's Warren, O., plant to simulate activity. It was at Warren and Niles that the company tried landing food in aeroplanes for those employees still in the plant. And it was at Niles that frightened parents were compelled to take legal measures in order to force the release of their daughters—girls who were "detained" after hours in the Republic plant. The company denied that the girls had been "imprisoned." Republic's Buffalo plant has 700 men working—2500 are out. And from Ironwood, Mich., comes a report that two Republic mines have shut down because the company is unable to accept ore shipments. A whirlwind campaign of organization is under way in Minnesota and Michigan, with Farmer-Labor Congressman John T. Bernard directing S.W.O.C. organizers in these states. Rapid unionization of iron-ore diggers and handlers is threatening Republic's supplies.

Meanwhile, nation-wide production of steel ingots has dropped fifteen points and financial columns reluctantly hint that some purchasers of steel may be forced to divert their future orders—away from the diehard independents.

The Challenge of Unity

THE appeal for international unity of action against fascist aggression, issued by the Socialist Party, Communist Party, and General Workers' Union of Spain, has come at a critical moment in the war to defend Spanish democracy. As the German and Italian chances for victory diminish, the fascists are resorting to increasingly open and desperate efforts to crush the people of Spain. Guernica and Almeria are indications of what may be expected from fascists stung by defeat. More necessary than ever is the disciplined unity of the workers, internationally as well as nationally, to consolidate and extend the victories over the interventionists.

Heartening, therefore, is the immediate response to the Spanish plea by George Dimitrov, spokesman for the Communist International. He proposes to the Second International and the Amsterdam trade-union international a joint conference to discuss methods of procedure in the united front against fascism. Failure of these international organizations or their national affiliates to respond to such a proposal would be t[o] neglect in the present situation.

Will the American Socialist Party in the international workers' front [in] porting Dimitrov's proposal?

Again on Jerome Dav[is]

THREE outstanding nat[ional] tions in the education fie[ld] concluded inquiries into the dis[missal] Yale University of Professor Jero[me] The last of these inquiries, that con[ducted] the Tenure Committee of the [Amer]ican Education Association, confirms the facts and recommendations made by the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors. The weight of professional opinion is squarely behind Davis.

The N. E. A. committee criticizes the Yale officials for failing to coöperate with it, condemns the tenure policy and practice of the Yale Corp., and praises the character of Professor Davis's scholarship and teaching record. It recommends that Davis be restored to his position.

There is no doubt that the failure of the

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Yale Corp. to reconsider its decision, in the light of the evidence accumulated by these professional organizations, will seriously injure the reputation of the university. At the same time, one must note with gratitude the spirit of professional coöperation and fair play which the various organizations of teachers have displayed in this case. Reactionary university administrations will think twice before facing such a distinguished united front for academic freedom.

The Writers' Congress

THE second congress of American writers, which met June 4-6 in New York, reflects the increasing maturity of our men and women of letters in the face of those abrupt and fundamental changes which mark contemporary society. Most of those who participated in the 1934 congress were present at this one. With them were many new important writers aroused to the struggle between fascism and democracy, all determined to struggle for the defense of culture. The three thousand people present at Carnegie Hall will long remember the inspiring opening of the congress. The hall was jammed, the aisles were crowded, and nearly 1000 people were turned away. The united-front character of the session was at once striking and stirring. The speakers, with the exception of Earl Browder, were politically unattached, yet Archibald MacLeish, Donald Ogden Stewart, Muriel Draper, Walter Duranty, and Ernest Hemingway made it unmistakably clear that the fate of culture is inseparably bound up with the maintenance and extension of genuine democracy against the assaults of Reaction. There is only one system that cannot produce good writers, Hemingway said, and that system is fascism; a writer who will not lie cannot live or work under fascism.

The papers read at the congress itself were rich in scholarship, brilliant in style, and marked by an implicit assumption and application of progressive social criteria. The speakers included outstanding writers from various parts of the country; the subjects ranged in space over America, Europe, Asia,

Donald Ogden Stewart

Walter Duranty

Joseph Freeman

Muriel Draper

Malcolm Cowley

Robert M. Coates

WRITERS' CONGRESS

Caricatures by Georges Schreiber at Carnegie Hall, New York

Ernest Hemingway

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and Latin America, and in time from the early democratic roots of our literature to the future tasks and obligations of the American writer.

Several Trotskyites present, who did not once participate in the creative and constructive discussions, attacked the Soviet Union and the people's front in Spain. Their conduct in an atmosphere of full and free discussion convinced the doubtful that Trotskyism is sterile, destructive, and reactionary. The overwhelming majority of the delegates, supporting the Soviet Union and the people's front, adopted twenty-one resolutions on specific issues connected with the struggle against fascism and for democracy and culture. The congress ended with the establishment of a permanent national organization of American writers, with Donald Ogden Stewart as president.

The Brass Check

NO American newspaper carried the report of the non-partisan investigation headed by Arthur Garfield Hays of the Ponce massacre in Puerto Rico on Palm Sunday, published in part in last week's NEW MASSES. A summary of the entire report and copies of our reprint were released in advance to the most important press agencies and newspapers. The New York *Times* merely ran a dispatch from Puerto Rico to the effect that Governor Winship had gone to Washington to fight the report, and did not dare let its readers know just what the report said.

The American press can boycott this one report, but it cannot so easily dismiss the facts underlying the situation. Wall Street's rule over Puerto Rico is shown not only in the murder of twenty people at a Nationalist demonstration, but by undeniable economic realities. There can be no peace in Puerto Rico so long as the Puerto Ricans are not free men. The Puerto Ricans cannot be free so long as 61 percent of the island's sugar, 85 percent of its tobacco, 60 percent of its banks, 50 percent of its public utilities, and 100 percent of its steamship lines are foreign owned.

Immediately after the occupation of Puerto Rico by the United States in 1898, Major General Miles proclaimed: "The people of the U. S. . . . come bringing the banner of freedom, inspired by a noble purpose . . . to give to all . . . the advantages and blessings of enlightened civilization." Thirty-one years later, the economic commissioner of the Puerto Rican legislature addressed the United States as follows: "The American tariff compels Puerto Rico to buy necessities in the American market at monopoly prices. The sugar and tobacco industries are largely absentee-owned; their profits leave Puerto Rico never to return. It is this flow of wealth out of the island and the high cost of living that keep the bulk of the population in the same state as thirty-one years ago. We want the American government to stop picking our pockets."

These facts can be dismissed only at the peril of more such massacres as happened at Ponce.

Angelo Herndon

Archibald MacLeish

Granville Hicks

Strategy

FOR those who still maintain some lingering doubts about the Nazi bombardment of Guernica or, in general, the Nazi policy of bombarding open towns, we reproduce the following statement from the *Militaer-Wochenblatt* of May 12. The *Wochenblatt* is one of the two official military organs of the German government.

"Today no country is in a position to renounce the bombardment of open towns. Formerly it was possible to spare the area behind the lines without endangering the military conduct of war because this area was practically untouchable, but today technique has given nations an air weapon with which they can destroy the economic base of the enemy behind his lines."

Decline of Empire

THERE is an ominous parallel between the Imperial Conference of 1911 and the one which is now meeting in London. Both were convened in a coronation atmosphere which served to mask the real in[illegible]tions of imperialist policy. Both [illegible] the main item under discussion th[illegible]sion of foreign policy and a war program. As in 1911, the real work of the conference is being carried on behind closed doors. And th[illegible] is every chance that the strategy of Gre[illegible] and Haldane in the earlier conference, [illegible] strategy which paved the way for the war of 1914, will be duplicated by Neville Chamberlain, Sir John Simon, and Sir Samuel Hoare.

The main purpose of the British government is to insure the coöperation of the dominions in the enormous armament program which the Conservative leadership has launched. The refusal of the government to stand with France and the Soviet Union in a collective-security program for the maintenance of peace has resulted in the strengthening of Germany, Italy, and Japan. The consequence of this position is the isolationist imperial armament policy into which the dominions will now be drawn, if Sir Thomas Inskip, defense coördinator, has his way.

In line with this isolationist strategy is the reluctance of the government to enter into trade treaties with the United States. The aim of British protectionism is to keep control of empire trade closely in the hands of Downing Street. Some of the dominions, Canada in particular, object to this program. But the appointment to the premiership of Neville Chamberlain, as staunch a protectionist as his father, indicates the difficulties in the way of those who would like to see a

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lower tariff and reduced dominion duties.

The real issue at the conference is between collective security and isolationism. In the economic sphere, this issue takes the form of a conflict between trade coöperation and a kind of imperial autarchy. Opposition to the Conservative policy may be expected from several significant sources. The New Zealand labor government has already voiced its support of the principle of collective security. South Africa has opposed the abandonment of Ethiopia at Geneva. Canada and Australia, influenced by United States policy, stand for an Anglo-American trade agreement. And popular sentiment in England against the suicidal program of the Tory cabinet is rapidly growing to the point of effectiveness.

Let Them Eat Garbage

STEEL is strong, but men are stronger, a German poet once sang. He was referring to the boundless suffering of his people during the World War. We wonder what this poet now thinks of the proposals set forth by Dr. W. Ziegelmeyer, member of the Nazi war ministry, in a book entitled *Raw Materials for the German Food Industry*. Under fascism such a book could be published only with the approval of the government, hence its viewpoint is official. Its academic title covers a desperate attempt to meet Germany's food crisis in connection with Nazi plans for a war of aggression against democratic countries.

According to Dr. Ziegelmeyer, fantastically high prices of meat, eggs, and milk prevent about twenty million Germans from getting sufficient albumen. This deficiency breaks down resistance to contagious diseases, shatters the nervous system. Dr. Ziegelmeyer agrees with the English scientist who said that the German collapse in 1918 was partly due to the fact that the German workers had been "demoralized" by their craving for albumen.

The Nazis have found the key to this crucial problem. During the World War, the Second Reich ordered German citizens to save garbage waste for the pigs. The Third Reich orders garbage to be saved for the citizens themselves. Dr. Ziegelmeyer recommends the manufacture of foods from organic rubbish such as blood and other products of the slaughterhouse, refuse from the fish markets, beer yeast, spoiled milk, wood sugar. "The fortune in the garbage can," Dr. Ziegelmeyer urges, "must be put at the disposal of the German people." Germans are already compelled to eat butter made from coal. Now, still forced to shout "Heil Hitler," they can indulge in meat, eggs, milk, and fish made of garbage.

Safe for Dictatorship?

THE aftermath of Almeria has contributed a new perspective on European alignments in the coming war. Every such crisis forces the great powers to place their policies in respect to future fascist aggression in sharper focus than before. Failure to act in this emergency was not only of intrinsic importance but also an indication of policy in similar emergencies in the future.

In shelling Almeria, the fascist powers again dared to violate all hitherto existing obligations of peaceful diplomacy while nothing of consequence was done either to punish or to censure them for it. Three separate questions are involved: (1) whether loyalist planes had fired on the *Deutschland* with or without provocation; (2) whether the Nazis were justified in shelling Almeria in reprisal without attempting to prove that the bombing of the *Deutschland* was unprovoked; (3) whether the Nazis were justified in bombarding an open city, killing women and children, in reprisal for an attack upon a warship, even granted that reprisal was in order.

The first was a question of fact, the other two matters of law and opinion. Only the Spanish government showed its good faith by proposing an investigation to establish the facts in the first problem. In respect to the other two questions, the Nazi action was clearly on the lowest order of political and military morality. No international law or agreement is possible unless both sides in a dispute make at least an effort to substantiate their claims before some competent tribunal or before world opinion itself. The Nazi action can be defended only on the barbarous presupposition that nations can take whatever action they please merely on an unsupported assertion that they have been wronged. There is no necessity to prove the wrong or to adjust the compensation to the evil done. Only by this law of the jungle could the Nazis be justified in their failure to consult other powers in the Non-Intervention Committee or in killing women and children in a port hundreds of miles from the scene of the alleged wrong.

The frightful fact about this whole episode is the complacent policy of toleration pursued by both the British and French governments. The tories at the head of the British government have been perfidious in their handling of the Almeria incident. The consistent policy of Foreign Secretary Eden has been to placate the German and Italian fascists no matter what the cost to world peace.

As a matter of fact, the conclusion is inescapable that British policy has hardened in favor of conciliation with Hitlerism to a point that puts the Soviet Union, France, and some of the Balkan countries in peril of invasion never matched since the accession of Hitler to power. Some tory spokesmen have reached a point where they have begun to revise the old democratic slogans of the post-World War period. Lord Hardinge of Penhurst recently declared: "Let us remember, then, that the task to which we have set ourselves is no longer to make the world safe for democracy, but *to make the coëxistence of democracies and dictatorships safe for the world.*" It is plain that Reaction will not fight the next war on the propaganda basis of the last.

This policy means continuous compromise with the fascist powers in order to drive or bribe them to make aggressions eastward, against the Balkans and the U. S. S. R. The British tories operate on the theory that the empire will be safe if Hitler can be induced to shift his point of attack to the east, especially against the Soviet Union. It is for this reason that Downing Street would gladly sign a western pact with Hitler if only France would consent to go along without the Soviet Union. The Nazis feed on this type of blackmail, and every aggression raises the ante in this diplomatic three-card monte still higher.

David H. Popper recently summarized this phase of the situation for the Foreign Policy Association in an analysis of strategy and diplomacy in the Mediterranean. Mr. Popper's conclusions would make rich reading at Downing Street: "The democratic states are in a position to utilize their strategic and diplomatic advantage to carry out a policy of firm resistance to fascist ambitions. Such a course, it is believed, would be more successful in diminishing the likelihood of a European war than the policy of temporizing followed by the democracies in the Spanish conflict.

"A clear decision on this point by Britain and France would greatly contribute to the general political and economic settlement which they are now seeking to negotiate in Europe. If efforts to reach a comprehensive agreement are successful, it will be because Germany and Italy are convinced that they have more to gain by peaceful negotiation than by an adventurous diplomatic and military policy.

"Should a settlement prove impossible, however, Britain and France can ill afford to dissipate their advantages by retreating step by step before the offensives of Mussolini and Hitler."

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Chicago's Memorial Day Massacre

Mayor Kelly's cops killed seven Republic Steel strikers for attempting to assert their right of peaceful picketing

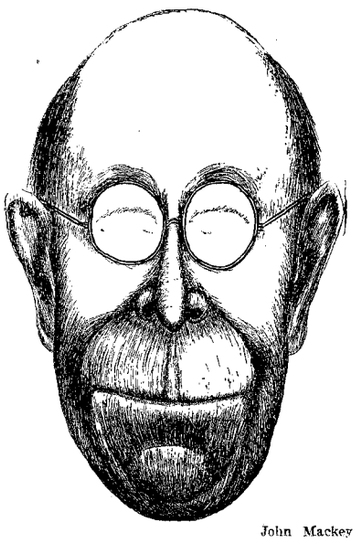
By George Robbins

"WE went out carrying two American flags and we came back with them, both wet with our own blood," a picket of the South Chicago Women's Steel Workers' Auxiliary said.

A midsummer sun, hot and blistering, hung over Chicago on Memorial Day. People deserted their homes, crowded public parks and beaches, motored to the Indiana sand dunes. American flags decorated public buildings. Colorful processions of marchers goose-stepped along Michigan Boulevard. You felt the holiday spirit as you filed out of the narrow, crowded street-car on Avenue O in South Chicago, and strolled across the prairie-land to strike headquarters with workers in shirt sleeves and summer garments. Passing the dingy frame homes of steel workers, you noticed that the neighborhood was deserted and that families had already walked over to Sam's place, formerly a dine-and-dance resort, now used as headquarters by the strikers of Republic Steel.

Thousands of men, women, and children were congregated at the south end of the dance resort, waiting for the speakers to ascend the improvised platform. Vendors were doing a good business in ice-cream bars and popsicles. A long line of strikers filed into Sam's place, where members of the Women's Steel Auxiliary had set up a food kitchen. A group of young strikers gathered under a tree and sang, "Solidarity forever—the union makes us strong." Joe Weber, field representative of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee and chairman of the meeting, announced that the gathering had assembled to protest police interference with peaceful picketing at the Republic plant, six blocks away from strike headquarters. He reviewed the events that led up to the meeting.

More than 25,000 workers, native Americans, Negro and white, Slavs and Mexicans, had walked out on strike in the Chicago area on May 26 when Republic Steel, Youngstown Sheet & Tube, and Inland Steel refused to sign a collective-bargaining contract with the S.W.O.C. Several hundred scabs remained in the Republic plant, but the other two companies stopped almost all operations. Under a pre-strike agreement, a small number of men wearing special badges were permitted entrance into the two mills so as to keep Chicago supplied with gas. Violence at the Republic plant had flared up the first day of the walkout. Chicago police commanded by Captain James Mooney, had roughed up a mass picket line, arrested forty strikers, including John Riffe, field director of the S.W.O.C.



John Mackey

Tom Girdler—Republic's President

Supervising Captain Prendergast had canceled all leaves for the day at twenty-three police stations. Police clubs had smashed a strikers' sound truck.

A charge by Van A. Bittner, regional C.I.O. director, that Republic Steel had "enlisted the support of captains and other high officers of the Chicago police department," and had violated the National Labor Relations Act, was met by Mayor Kelly's statement that "there should be no interference with peaceful picketing." The mayor had added that he believed that "every union right should be observed." But several days later, more than one hundred cops again assaulted a mass picket line several blocks away from the steel mill, fired revolvers into the air, clubbed men and women marchers senseless, and arrested half a dozen strikers on charges of conspiracy to invade the plant.

The Chicago chapter of the National Lawyers' Guild wired a sharp protest to President Roosevelt, charging the Chicago police with violence against the strikers, preventing peaceful picketing, and illegal and discriminatory arrests of strikers and sympathizers. The Chicago *Tribune* lauded the police for preserving "life and property, the business with which it is entrusted by the community." The *Tribune* also assailed the C.I.O. contribution to the Democratic campaign fund last fall, and raged that John L. Lewis and his associates "have come to believe that, having paid their money, they need no longer respect the rights of anyone, whether employer, worker, bystander, or property owner." Many state and local governments, the *Tribune* went on, have supported the labor policy of Washington, but "Chicagoans can take pride in the fact that in this jurisdiction the law is not for sale, the rights of citizens are safeguarded, and the police recognize that their primary duty is to preserve the peace."

Swarthy Leo Krzycki, regional director of the S.W.O.C., stood before the microphone on the improvised platform at Sam's place and said, "Violence against peaceful picketing must stop. Republic Steel must abide by the Wagner act. We don't want fascism in America."

At the close of the meeting, men and women fell into a marching line on Green Bay Avenue. There was a good deal of laughter and camaraderie; several strikers joked with news photographers. Marchers held up a forest of placards: "Republic Steel shall sign a union contract," "Win with the C.I.O." Some of the women took their children on the line. At the head of the parade two young men carried huge American flags. Slowly, the parade moved up the road and turned sharply into the vast stretch of prairie facing the Republic steel plant, a bleak structure. Thin, pencil-line wisps of smoke oozed out of two stacks in the distance.

"They're not making steel in there," one striker said, pointing to the smoke-stacks; "they're burning paper."

DEEP into the prairie they marched. You could see the blue-coated policemen, five hundred of them, their badges glistening in the sun. When the marchers came within two blocks of the Republic gates, the police closed ranks, halted the picket line with menacing clubs. One cop whipped his revolver out, fingered it gingerly, and slid it back into its holster. Police captains and picket leaders exchanged words. A group of cops began to prod the strikers' front line and, when the workers refused to move, the police billies began to swing relentlessly.

"Hold your ranks," strikers shouted to each other. "We've got the right to peaceful picketing."

Tear-gas grenades sailed into the crowd, enveloping the strikers in a thick, yellowish-blue cloud. The marchers quickly retreated, coughing and sputtering, and scattered in all directions on the rough and swampy prairie-land. There was a crackle of pistol shots, followed by a rapid volley of gunfire. The bullets danced in the field like grasshoppers. A grey-haired woman retreating ahead of me stopped suddenly. Her legs buckled under her and I could see the blood gushing from a leg

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wound. "I'm shot! I'm shot!" she cried hysterically.

The field was strewn with dead and wounded. Police swept over the prairie, pummeling half-conscious men and women, hauling them into patrol wagons. Half a dozen private cars from strike headquarters, red cross signs on window shields, raced into the prairie to carry away the injured. Five hospitals in the South Chicago area were taxed beyond capacity. Dr. Nickamin, staff physician at the South Side Hospital, said, "The wounded looked as if they had come from a virtual massacre." The most seriously wounded were taken by police to the Bridewell Hospital, attached to the criminal jail, at least thirty miles from the scene of the shooting. Two of the wounded pickets bled to death in the patrol wagon for lack of attention. Scores of the injured were treated in Sam's place, converted into a hospital by the Women's Auxiliary.

At a hearing conducted by the Citizens' Emergency Committee on Industrial Relations, composed of university professors, social workers, ministers, and doctors, eye-witnesses to the massacre told of brutal treatment by the police. One man engaged in first-aid work drove to the prairie after the shooting had ended, but police, despite the lack of ambulance accommodations, refused to allow him to take wounded strikers to a hospital. Many of the injured who escaped the police shunned treatment at hospitals when they learned they would be placed under arrest. Reverend Fisk of the South Shore Community Church, an eye-witness to the shooting, told how police had held him incommunicado for nineteen hours after he was arrested near the plant.

"Policemen were shooting wildly," declared the Reverend Fisk. "A fellow one hundred feet from the line of march was struck down by a bullet. I saw two policemen chase an unarmed worker who was fleeing and begging for mercy. He fell into a ditch and they clubbed him without mercy." The Reverend Fisk had taken pictures of the scene, but the police confiscated his films.

One of the most vivid accounts of the shooting was given by a Republic striker, a World War veteran. "I was in the war and fought in France," he said, "but I never heard so many bullets as those coppers fired. Women and children were screaming. They were like a herd of panic-stricken cattle. I fled until they got me. I saw a woman shot down and dragged away by a policeman. That's what we got for trying to establish peaceful picketing, which was all we wanted to do."

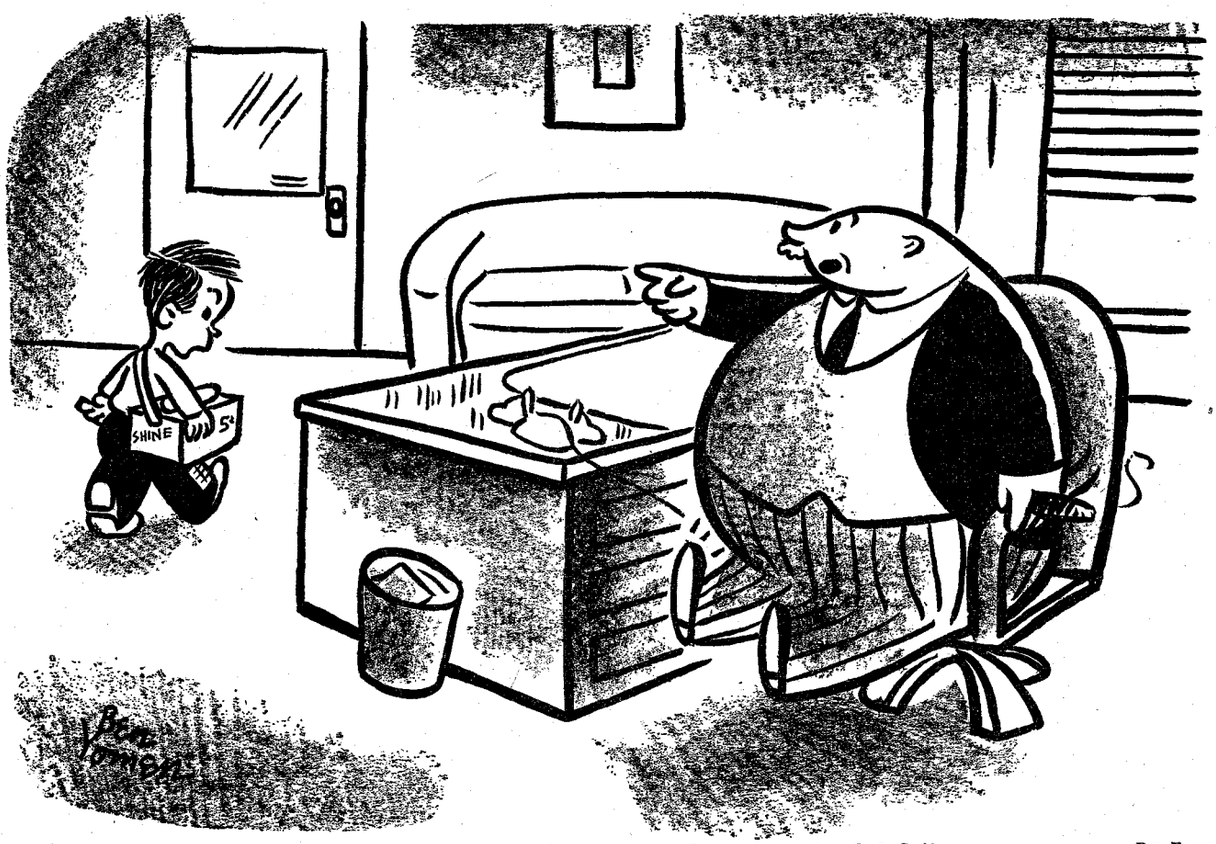
More than one hundred people were wounded in the massacre. Three strikers were killed on the spot, one was clubbed to death, three more succumbed to their wounds within the week. The seventy-five persons who were jailed were booked forty-eight hours later and charged with conspiracy to commit an illegal act, which carries a maximum sentence of five years and a $2000 fine.

Police officials and the Chicago *Tribune* were quick to place blame for the massacre on the C.I.O. leaders and the Communist Party. The speed with which the Cook County Communist Party issued a mimeographed leaflet condemning the shooting was cited by a police captain as evidence that "they knew in advance the workers were going to be led into attacking the police, and they encouraged the attack." When it was discovered that one of the slain marchers, a cook in the pickets' soup kitchen, was a Communist, the *Tribune* unearthed the "Red" scare.

Defending the murdered worker, the local Communist Party replied: "Comrade Rothmund was a useful worker, a member of the bakers' union, a citizen of Chicago, and far more valuable than Colonel McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune*, or Tom Girdler, the parasite exploiter of steel workers and other tax dodgers who live off the sweat and blood of Chicago men, women, and children."

In reply to Mayor Kelly, who stated from his summer home in Wisconsin that Chicago police have "the duty of protecting life and property," and to the raving charges of the *Tribune* that the marchers, "lusting for blood," and encouraged by the Communists, were prepared to seize the Republic mill, Van A. Bittner declared: "The purpose of the Sunday parade was to peacefully demonstrate the strength of the strike, and persuade those inside to come out. The Republic Steel is using the Chicago police as a buffer between itself and the strikers. They know that if we have peaceful picketing the men will come out of the plant. This so-called 'Red scare' of the Republic Steel is nothing more than vicious propaganda. Tom Girdler, president of Republic Steel, and those who are supporting this company in the strike, last fall just as viciously heralded the propaganda throughout the nation that President Roosevelt was a Communist and that if he were reëlected, there would be civil war in this country. The American people answered this challenge of Republic Steel by electing President Roosevelt by the largest majority any candidate has ever received, and the American people will answer this challenge of the Republic Steel in the same manner."

Not since the Haymarket affair has Chicago labor been so aroused. Wives of steel workers picket the city hall with placards: "Mayor Kelly—you have blood on your hands." "Who gave the order shoot to kill?" Trade unions, professional groups, cultural and fraternal organizations have come to realize, after the Memorial Day massacre, that a semi-fascist regime rules Chicago today, and that only a 100-percent union town, now on the way, will throttle it.



"Remember, be a good boy—and don't join the C.I.O." Ben Yomen

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The Dirtiest Trick

The labor-spy dodge known as "hooking" gives an unforgettable picture of employing-class "ethics"

By Leo Huberman

PERHAPS even more tragic than the story of men fired from their jobs is the tale of those unfortunates who are tricked into an agreement whereby they betray their fellow-workmen. In the Fruehauf Trailer case the operative was brought in from outside. In many cases, however, this is impossible for one reason or other, so the agency resorts to "hooking." This is the technical term for the conversion of an honest workman into a spy. Mr. Williams, a worker, comes home one night to find a stranger waiting for him. The stranger, an affable, courteous gentleman, says he represents a group of stockholders who are interested in finding out whether the plant is being run as efficiently as possible, whether the management is fair to the men, etc. Would Mr. Williams be interested in supplying this information, which would be of great use to the stockholders and would harm nobody? Of course, the stockholders would pay him for his trouble—say fifteen dollars a week for writing a daily report. Mr. Williams, unsuspecting and in need of the extra money, agrees. He understands that secrecy is necessary because the stockholders do not want to act upon their findings until they have collected all the facts. So he consents to write a daily report to a box number in another city. He is paid fifteen dollars in advance for the first week and he signs a receipt. All is well.

But not for long. Another week or two go by and then the stranger suggests that he's slipping—his work isn't as good as it should be. "We want more of what the men are talking about, any complaints they have, any union activity, etc." At this point, Mr. Williams may become suspicious, and balk at the idea. He may then be persuaded that clearly he would be doing no wrong if he wrote his reports as suggested, because the stockholders are only interested in tracking down the Communists, agitators, and trouble-makers. So he continues, making his reports "better," as suggested. The extra money comes in handy. When he finally realizes that he has become a paid stool-pigeon, it's hard for him to give it up. He is "hooked."

If, however, he realizes earlier that there is something shady about the whole business and decides to quit, he may be gently reminded that he has been receiving money for spying, and what would his fellow-workers think of him when they are shown his signed receipts? A strong man will decide to come clean anyway, tell his fellow-workers he has been framed, and see what happens. A weak man will be frightened—and remain "hooked." He works in the plant as before, draws his usual wages, and writes daily spy reports on the activities of his friends in the factory.

The record of the LaFollette committee hearings is studded with cases of such "hooking" of innocent men. Even the agency heads admitted it was a common practice with them (though some of them had an aversion to the term "hooking"—they preferred to say "employ" or "make contact with"). An operative of fourteen years' experience, one who had been with several agencies and knew every angle of the business, was a willing witness—he had decided to quit the business. Here is the record of his testimony on hooking:

SENATOR LAFOLLETTE: Have you ever done any hooking or roping?

MR. KUHL: Yes, sir.

SENATOR LAFOLLETTE: How do you do that?

MR. KUHL: Well, first you look your prospect over, and, if he is married, that is preferable. If he is financially hard up, that is number two. If his wife wants more money or he hasn't got a car, that all counts. And you offer him this extra money; naturally you don't tell him what you want him for. You have got some story that you are representing some bankers or some bond-holders or an insurance company and they want to know what goes on in there. You probably tell him, "I want to know more of what these foremen and superintendents do than your fellow workmen." . . .

SENATOR LAFOLLETTE: After a fellow gets hooked, suppose he wants to get unhooked; is that difficult for him?

MR. KUHL: Well, if he is a good man and you don't want to lose him, because they are hard to hook, you will try to keep him with you. You have his receipts, and probably he will sign a receipt with a number, and he says, "Aw, hell, that don't mean anything. That is only a number." But still you have his handwriting where he wrote in his original reports.

Once hooked, it becomes the operative's next job to get himself elected to some office in the union, preferably that of recording secretary, so he can have ready access to the names of the members—to be reported to the agency—to be reported to the firm—to be discharged. Roy Williams was one such operative. Here is his affidavit:

I, Roy Williams, of my own free will, do voluntarily acknowledge I have been in the employ of the Corporations Auxiliary Corporation as espionage operative, and, at the same time and during the same period, I was the elected and active recording secretary and trustee of the Graham-Paige local of the United Automobile Workers.

Signed: Roy Williams

Witnesses:
Edward Ayres
Richard T. Frankensteen
L. S. Grogan

Richard Frankensteen, one of the witnesses to this confession, is now a member of the executive board of the United Automobile Workers. In his testimony to the LaFollette committee, he made the following statement about Mr. Williams:

He was, I believe, the best liked and most popular man in Graham-Paige Motor Co. He worked there for seventeen years. He was very well thought of. He was elected to the position of recording secretary, and this year is chairman of the board of trustees. He had worked there for seventeen years, and only during the last three years has he been hired by Corporations Auxiliary. He was hooked into it. By that I mean they got him in; they roped him. He did not know what it was about until they got him in. Then when he tried to get out, I understand a Mr. H. L. Madison urged him to stay in, told him his work was perfectly all right, that he should stay, there was nothing wrong, that the Corporations Auxiliary was not the same type as the other agencies and he should certainly stay there. So the fellow, after seventeen years in the plant, with two children, is out on the street, without a job. I don't know whether the Corporations Auxiliary will take care of him or not.

That man was not a typical spy. It was not his ambition to become a stool-pigeon or spy, as we call them, a rat. He did not mean to be that at all, he was just hooked into it.

The Roy Williams tragedy is not unusual. It is typical. An ex-officer of the National Corporation Service admitted that of some three hundred operatives upon whom he had kept records, over two hundred were hooked men. One of the most pitiful instances of the terrible harm done by hooking is the case of the young man who never could get over the feeling of horror within himself that he had betrayed his fellow-workers. Even after making a clean breast of his spying activities, even after being absolved of all blame by the union heads, he was so overcome with remorse and shame that if by chance he passed a vegetable store window in which the sign "Northern Spy Apples" was displayed, he would break out into a cold sweat and his heart would pound like a trip-hammer!

The pity of it is that many of the spies are so very capable. They are popular, able, and have all the qualities of leadership. It is reported on good authority that when one such spy—the recording secretary of a Detroit local—made a confession, many of the members of the local, grown men, broke down and wept openly. He was the best-liked man in the union, he had worked with the men for years, he was everybody's friend.

But the spy who has become an official in the union is, of course, in a key position to wreak havoc in the organization. The more

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able he is, the more dangerous he is. Some spies have been able to reach the top—and all the way up they have been doing their deadly work. William Green, president of the A. F. of L., testified that a spy had become president of the Savannah Trades & Labor Council, was vice-president of the Georgia Federation of Labor for four years, and had even been nominated for president at the state convention of the A. F. of L.! His reports, meanwhile, went regularly through the Pinkerton agency to the Savannah Electric & Power Co., and to every other company in Georgia that subscribed to the Pinkerton service.

From the testimony of Robert Travis, organizer for the United Automobile Workers, the committee learned of a federal labor union in Flint that had shrunk from a membership of 26,000 in 1935 to 122 in August 1936, wrecked by union officials who were spies. Affidavits of similar happenings in other unions are strewn throughout the pages of the record.

NOW LET'S STOP to look at the picture. Workers in plants throughout the United States want to form unions and bargain collectively. Industrialists in plants throughout the United States are opposed to the efforts of the workers to organize and bargain collectively. Spies are hired by the industrialists to help them in their fight against trade unions. Spy is a war term, and labor spies are part of the industrial war. Understand, the opponents in this war are not the workers on the one side, and the detective agencies on the other. Not at all. The detective agencies are the paid tools of the employers. They would play no part in the war unless they were hired to do so. The line-up in this war is workers vs. employers, labor vs. capital.

This does not absolve the agencies from blame. Their methods are reprehensible, their chief operatives are very often thugs with criminal records. They will stop at nothing to get and increase their business. They have, for example, admitted that they shadowed Edward McGrady, assistant secretary of labor, when he was called in to settle a Chevrolet strike in Toledo in 1935; they planted two operatives in the room next to this government official in the midst of his negotiations to settle the strike. They have admitted that, by failing to register their operatives in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Georgia, they have violated the laws of those states; they have admitted that, like the makers of munitions, their business thrives on trouble—where none exists they make it. They have padded their agents' reports to make it appear that a peaceful situation was "dangerous" to the manufacturer; worse still, they have sent their undercover operatives into plants to agitate, to form unions—and then have solicited business in those plants to get rid of the mischief they themselves have wrought. All this is in the record—every word of it is true. Nevertheless, it is correct to say that the detective agencies are not the force opposed to the workers. Facing the workers in their struggle toward unionization and collective bargaining are the industrialists who hire the agencies to carry on their work of destruction and pay them handsomely for it.

Why do the workers want to unionize and bargain collectively? Because, as they line up singly in their struggle against the opposing side, they are not on equal terms with the enemy. The Supreme Court of the U. S. has admitted this. In Holden vs. Hardy (169 U. S. 366, 397), the Court said:

> The legislature has also recognized the fact, which the experience of legislators in many states has corroborated, that the proprietors of these establishments and their operatives [workers] do not stand upon an equality and that their interests are, to a certain extent, conflicting. The former naturally desire to obtain as much labor as possible from their employees, while the latter are often induced by fear of discharge to conform to regulations which their judgment, fairly exercised, would pronounce to be detrimental to their health or strength. In other words, the proprietors lay down the rules and the laborers are practically constrained to obey them.

One group wants to sell labor, the other group wants to buy it. But the two groups are not equal in strength. The laborers organize into unions so they can have a voice, with the proprietors, in "laying down the rules." That's the purpose of unionization, of collective bargaining. When Henry Ford, who has an elaborate spy system of his own, says that "International financiers are behind the labor unions because they want to control industry and kill competition," he is talking through his hat. The men who are behind the labor unions are the workers who have learned from experience that only in unions can they obtain the strength they need to bargain on equal terms with their employers.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor, the primary cause of labor disputes is union recognition and other matters pertaining to the right of workers to organize. In 1935, of 2014 labor disputes, the major issues in 952, or 47.3 percent of the total, were workers' rights; in only 38.2 percent were wages and hours the cause. This was still true, according to the Department of Labor, in the first five months of 1936. Students of labor history in the U. S. know that, in general, this has been true in the past as well.

When the New York *Herald Tribune,* in its lead editorial on Feb. 10, 1937, said, "It is now recognized by custom and law in this country that labor has the right to organize,

Painting by Joseph Meert (A. C. A. Gallery)

Strikebreakers

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"Acute indigestion. He bit a cop." Ned Hilton

to bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing, and to strike," it was only half correct. It *is* now recognized *by law.* The National Labor Relations act gave labor those rights. But it *is not* now recognized *by custom*—no employer of labor spies recognizes it. The policies of Congress as declared in the Wagner act are completely defeated by industrial espionage.

It is important to keep clearly in mind the fact that the vested interests will brook no interference with their power. They will stay within the law only so long as the boundaries of the law are wide enough to give them full opportunity to wield their power. When those boundaries are narrowed, when a shift in the balance of governmental power brings with it an attempt to curb their ruthless activities, then these champions of law and order do not hesitate to violate the law.

These are the interests which are the first to cry "revolution" when workers take possession of the plants in which they work, which are so quick to condemn the sit-down as illegal. In the words of Senator Wagner:

> The sit-down has been used only in protest against repeated violations of industrial liberties which Congress has recognized. . . . The sit-down has been provoked by the long-standing, ruthless tactics of a few great corporations who have hamstrung the National Labor Relations Board . . . have systematically used spies and discharges and violence and terrorism to shatter the workers' liberties as defined by Congress, which they have neither the legal nor the moral right to do.
>
> The organized and calculated and cold-blooded sit-down has come, as always, not from the common people, but from a few great vested interests. The uprising of the common people has come, as always, only because of a breakdown in the ability of the law and our economic system to protect these rights.

What are we to think of these revelations of unfair and illegal industrial practices on the part of employers? Walter Lippmann, in his column in the New York *Herald Tribune,* March 6, 1937, tells us what to think.

> As long as big business stood intrenched behind its Pinkertons and its dogmas, it was in fact imbued with the psychology of class war, however much it might deplore the idea when openly preached from a soapbox. The refusal to recognize the unions and to negotiate with them could not by any possibility be described as an attitude of peace: among nations the equivalent is a refusal to have diplomatic relations, an act just short of war, which generally leads to war.

Thus put on our guard by Mr. Lippmann, we need not be taken in by such statements as the following made by Alfred P. Sloan Jr., on July 26, 1934.

> The management of General Motors holds that there is no real conflict between employers and employees. . . . Enlightened employers and enlightened employees realize that they have a mutuality of interests such as to dictate the wisdom of maintaining the highest degree of coöperation and harmonious relations.

We have learned that these are merely words without substance. Behind them is the reality of the class war, as exemplified in the use of Pinkerton spies.

Similarly, when the sit-down strikers are in possession of the Chrysler plant, and Mr. K. T. Keller, president of the Chrysler Corp., runs a full-page statement in the New York *Times* of March 15, 1937, in which the following assertion is made, "This company has conducted its industrial relations by and in accordance with generally acknowledged standards of fairness and equity"—we are not surprised. We are now aware that sugar-coated phrases covering the bitter pill of class war have long been prescribed for labor by capital. We leave to others the impossible task of reconciling the employment of Corporations Auxiliary spies with "standards of fairness and equity."

Occasionally, by accident, we are given the unusual opportunity to get behind the scenes as one industrialist talks to another. Then the difference between their silken phrases, offered for public consumption, and their real attitude becomes clear. H. D. Sayre is the commissioner of the National Metal Trades Assn., an organization of manufacturers devoted to the principle of the open shop. This group of manufacturers staunchly believes in organization—for themselves. They not only believe in it—they practice it. From their practice, as revealed to the LaFollette committee, it becomes plain that open shop means for them "open to non-union members only." At any rate here is part of a letter sent to Mr. Sayre, which throws some light on the behind-the-scenes attitude of our industrial leaders. The italics are mine.

> Columbus Branch N.M.T.A.
> July 7, 1936.
>
> Dear Homer:
>
> . . . What do you think of the advisability of having an operative whose business it would be to circulate generally and keep us informed in regard to the activities of *our friend the enemy?* . . .
>
> H. L. ENNIS, Secretary.

SENATOR LAFOLLETTE: What is the interpretation, Mr. Sayre, of the phrase "the activities of our friend the enemy" in this letter?

MR. SAYRE: Well, I assume that Mr. Ennis refers to the activities of the labor organizations, which are attempting to unionize the plants of the members of the association. . . .

There you have it. The enemy is the labor organizations which attempt to unionize. That th law gives these organizations that right is, for the National Metal Trades Assn., besid the point.

That's frankness in private. Frankne the open is indeed rare, so we are deeply i debted to Hal Smith, counsel of the Michigan Manufacturers' Assn., who seems to express the real point of view of the employers' group.

> We know of no reason why an employer in his plant should not have the right to employ a detective. We see no reflection in any way in the employment of detectives. "Detective" and "spy" are two names that are used in a derogatory sense, but *even a spy has a necessary place in time of war,* and it is not always that they are condemned [my italics].

This spokesman for the manufacturers leaves us no choice. We realize from his statement that Mr. Lippmann and the Marxists are right. The employers believe in and wage class war.

Industrialists love to make speeches about "the American way." Billboards all over the country are plastered with those familiar words, "the American way." In Europe there is also a class war. But labor spying there, by hired private spy agencies, is unknown. It is completely an American phenomenon. Is that what industrialists mean by "the American way?"

(This article concludes the series by Mr. Huberman.)

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The Threat of Frustration

A leading left-wing literary historian discusses some problems of the writer that lie on the political plane

By Granville Hicks

ROBERT CANTWELL, in reviewing some book—I forget what—commented on the picture it gave of literary frustration. "This," he said bitterly, "is the great tradition in American literature."

We may well think so. For nearly forty years literary criticism has been preoccupied with the frustrations of American authors. Puritanism, we were first told, was the cause of failure. Then Van Wyck Brooks looked more carefully and indicated our money-centered culture. Finally the Marxists have talked about frustration in terms of the contradictions and the decline of capitalist civilization.

We may quarrel about the explanation, but we cannot dispute the fact. Can anyone say that Mark Twain, Henry James, Hamlin Garland, Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair, and Jack London accomplished a quarter of what they had it in them to do? Look at the eighteenth-century British novelists, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett; look at Scott and Jane Austen; look even at Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot. It does not matter whether you admire their work or not. The only thing to notice is that there is no marked discrepancy between their potentialities and their achievements. They did as much as, by any reasonable standards, one could expect. We can say the same for American writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nor can we take more satisfaction in what has been called the middle generation. A group of critics in *The New Republic* has recently been examining the writers of this generation. Perhaps certain critics have exaggerated the degree of frustration, or attributed it to the wrong causes, but on the whole the series carries conviction. And note that the younger critics are not attacking the aims of the older writers, as one generation so often attacks the aims of its predecessor; their recurring complaint is that the writers who dominated American letters between 1910 and 1930 have not realized their aims, have not lived up to their promise. Frustration is the theme.

If one tenth of what has been said about frustration is accurate, it is obvious that no body of writers, such as the National Writers' Congress, ought to convene without placing upon its agenda what would appear to be the all-important topic for American authors. If the majority of our predecessors have been baffled and defeated, what reason have we for supposing we will escape the same end? And, more practically, what do we propose to do to frustrate the menace of frustration?

American writers cannot face the future without facing this problem. Each of us desires to do his job well. Each believes that he has certain talents, and, whether they are major or minor, he wants to use them. Each of us sees something about American life, something that seems to us true and unseen by others, and we want to communicate what we see. To be a minor writer is not necessarily a tragedy, but it is tragic to be a minor writer when one has major gifts. It is tragic to be driven to suicide or silence or hack work. It is tragic to fumble one's way from imperfect book to imperfect book, and it is tragic to achieve perfection by descending to trivialities. It is tragic to be driven inward into hard smugness, and it is tragic to dissipate one's powers in gushes of sentimentality. Vast museums of horrible examples have been assembled for our benefit; can we learn anything from them?

We face the future, hoping—perhaps unreasonably in view of what we know about the past—that we can persuade it to let us do our work. What kind of future is it likely to be? What will the next decade or two bring?

First of all, it is apparent that we are now in a period of partial recovery. This recovery we largely owe to the fear of war, for which the countries of Europe are preparing, not only by building up their armies, navies, and air forces, but also by amassing great piles of foodstuffs and war supplies. Our own government is, less frantically, making the same preparations. The industrial machine is being set to work again, partly in order to fill the actual demands created by military programs, partly because American finance is speculating on future demands.

No great knowledge of economics is needed to predict, in a rough way, the course that recovery will follow. If war in Europe is postponed, the familiar cycle will be gone through, probably more rapidly than in the past. If the postponement of war is accompanied by the diminution of war preparations, this in itself might bring about a collapse. Even, however, if war buying continues, or if industrial enterprise is sufficiently strong to withstand the effect of a sharp reduction in military business, the collapse will nevertheless come, probably accompanied by ruinous inflation.

Few persons, I suspect, are optimistic enough to believe that peace will outlast the business cycle. Few persons doubt that the next two or three years will bring the beginning of war. The first effect of war, since we can assume that we will not participate at the outset, will be to stimulate American business. In the event of our remaining neutral, this would postpone, but at the same time would intensify, the inevitable depression. Far more likely, however, is our participation, with results that those of us who can remember 1917, 1918, and 1919 have little difficulty in imagining.

Either depression or participation in war would result in Reaction. Because big business has frequently yielded to the C.I.O., we are not to suppose that business men have fallen in love with unionism. On the contrary, the necessity for making concessions has intensified their fear and their hatred. There are signs enough that they are eagerly awaiting the day when they can begin a campaign of reprisal. Already there are American capitalists who feel that only fascism can protect their profits, and either depression or war will bring, in one form or another, an attempt at a fascist coup.

What the next few years—or it may be only the next few months—offer us is a breathing spell, quite literally that, an opportunity to get our breath and brace ourselves for the impact of fascism. The victory of fascism is not inevitable. A year or so ago it was fashionable to say privately that fascism was bound to win in the United States. Now we know better. We know that there are great forces that can be brought into the struggle to preserve and extend democratic rights, forces that the power of reactionary capitalism cannot withstand. The only question is whether these forces can be led into action quickly enough.

This, then, is the future the American writer faces. Shall we deceive ourselves? It is not going to be a comfortable period for human beings. It is going to be a damned uncomfortable time for writers. It will not be easy in such a period for us to do the work we can and ought to do. Frustration waits, I fear, around many corners, and only good men—and good women—will survive.

Let us, so far as we can, draw up a program for survival.

We might, first of all, examine one or two paths, that, I trust, none of us is likely to take. So firmly fixed is the tradition of protest in American literature that no writer is apt to say baldly, "Go to, now, I will be a reactionary." But there are writers who, under the guise of defending established authority, let us say, or some sort of religious dogma, will take the reactionary side. Other writers, by some sort of hocus-pocus, will be able to convince themselves that loyalty to democracy requires them to defend the special privileges

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of the great capitalists. Still others, taking refuge in the doctrine of the aristocratic minority, nature's noblemen, will look with contempt upon the masses, and, in practice, by trying to restrain the masses, will lend their aid to Reaction.

I need not tell you that these writers are on one of the paths to frustration. We have seen some of the reactionary writers, and we know what they are doing to themselves. We have seen other men, better men, some of them with us in this Congress, turn back from the path of Reaction as if they had had a vision of death and caught the very stench of decay. Where, even in the confusion of present-day America, are the generous impulses, the broad sympathies, the seeing eye and the feeling heart? We know, and we know what kind of literature is created when these qualities are absent. We do not have to wait to see our reactionary writers follow their predecessors, the fascist writers of Germany and the fascist writers of Italy and the Gadarene swine, in a suicidal plunge into the sea of brutality and lies.

There can be no temptation for us here; but what of the author who tells us politics is none of his—or our—business? The writer must see and record, he says, and keep himself aloof—and particularly in times such as these. How persuasive this is! We do want to do our work, and we know that our work requires concentration—requires, indeed, a degree of aloofness. Political activities take time; political passions make it difficult to see clearly; political thinking may interfere with the writer's special kind of thought.

The only trouble with this program of aloofness is that it will not work. It will not work, in the first place, because, while we calmly go about our literary labors, the forces of fascism are sedulously creating a world in which such labors cannot be carried on. Try to be aloof while storm-troopers' clubs are beating upon your skull!

IN THE second place, and more important, aloofness is not humanly workable in such a period as ours. Why is it that Robinson Jeffers, Robert Frost, Edna Millay, and all the other devotees of the ivory tower suddenly sally forth now and again and mount soap-boxes? It is because no sensitive, alert, broadly sympathetic human being—no artist, in short—can remain permanently indifferent to the injustices of our world and to the threat of organized injustice in a fascist world. You cannot stand aloof from the issues of today and remain a whole man. There are those, it is true, who become eunuchs willingly for the sake of the Kingdom of Art, but I do not know that they attain it.

We are, I take it, writers who have rejected both of these paths. We will not aid Reaction, and we will neither try to stand aloof nor confine our participation in the struggle to confused, ineffectual sallies from ivory towers that have become strangely prison-like. We are agreed on two propositions: we are against war and fascism, and we believe that the writer must participate, as a human being and as a writer, in the fight against the twin evils. These are the solid and sufficient bases of our own united front.

The immediate question is, of course: what can we do? We ought to discuss first, perhaps, some practical problems of the united front. These practical problems may seem to you unworthy of consideration in a paper that began with the rather grandiose aim of discussing the dangers of literary frustration in the coming years, but it is on our ability to solve just such problems that our survival depends. Take, for instance, the eminently practical problem of division of time. It is equally our duty to do good writing and to try, by our writing and by whatever other means are possible, to make the world a place in which good writing can be done. It is not easy to do either of these things; it is almost

Lithograph by Elizabeth Olds

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impossibly difficult to do both of them together.

Yet do them we must. I do not need to talk to you about the calls for help that reach us all: will you speak here? won't you contribute to that? please send a letter of protest to so-and-so; be sure to attend this meeting. For God's sake, you cry, let me do my work! Yes, that's right, you must do your work, if it's worth doing—and only you can decide that. But at the same time you must help. There are causes more important than your work. There are causes that can be served by sacrificing not your work, but your leisure. Where is the line to be drawn? I cannot tell you. Nobody can tell you. You must decide for yourself. And heaven help you if you decide wrong!

There is another, a related but a subtler problem. Writers, in common with other intellectuals, find themselves brought by the fight against fascism into association with great mass movements, labor unions, political parties, and organizations of other types.

Now the role of the intel-
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vering that he is less fitted to lead a
or movement than the bootblack on the corner, refuse to follow him. Thereupon he discovers that the party, the union, or other organization to which he has offered himself is not only ungrateful but stupid, incompetent, and evil. He becomes the simon-pure friend of labor who criticizes any particular labor policy for the anti-labor press.

There are other and less disastrous types. There is the perfectionist, the man who approaches the labor movement with a starry look in his eyes, and is sent scurrying back to his hermit's cell when he discovers that workers are human. There is the man who commits himself to downright radicalism, and then, finding that he is unwilling to pay the price, tries to save his face by insisting that radicalism is at fault. There is the fence-sitter, the man who is always in favor of the labor movement in general but always opposed, on the soundest theoretical grounds of course, to any policy that requires him to act.

These are types of frustration. And, on the other hand, there is the writer who allows himself to be absorbed by an organization. Absorption can be either physical or intellectual. Physical absorption is at least dignified, and may sometimes be the better way. Intellectual absorption is always bad. No writer can afford to let a party or a union do his thinking for him. He may properly act in unison with his group, but the only kind of thinking that is fit for his books is his own.

More and more, writers will be called upon to take an active part in the labor movement, and the writer must learn to subordinate his personality while maintaining his integrity. As with the simpler problem of time and energy, the individual must draw the line, and it is not easy to do.

We come closer than our predecessors to understanding the world, not because we are brighter, but because the issues have become sharper. And we have, as many earlier writers have not had, a sense of belonging to America. In the masses who are marching with us we have companions and we have a potential, if not yet actual, audience.

Problems that our predecessors found insoluble are solved for us, and I believe that the problems that do face us, real as they are, are less difficult. In the past it has often been the writers we feel to have been the most talented who were the most terribly frustrated. I have a feeling that will not be true for our generation. Lesser writers may be overcome by difficulties such as I have described. Our major writers will not.

I believe that here, in this audience, are men and women who, during the next five or ten or fifteen years, will do work as fine as the best in American literature. They will know how to draw strength, not only out of the struggle in which we are all engaged, but also out of the very difficulties I have set before you. They will be with us in the struggle, perhaps leaders, perhaps not, but always dependable, always striking the blow they are fitted to strike, and they will express the spirit of our struggle, though they may never write directly about it. Their books will march in step with the marching feet of millions, and they will be great as the tasks of these coming years are great. And perhaps in some future day men, reading their books, will understand this period as we cannot understand it, and will see in it, not an uncomfortable breathing-spell, filled with torturing decisions and hazardously complex problems, but a stirring preface to a glorious era.

Scott Johnston

SEEING AMERICA FIRST
XII—In Receiver's Hands

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Democracy in American Letters

A well-known critic calls for a thorough mastery of our native literary traditions

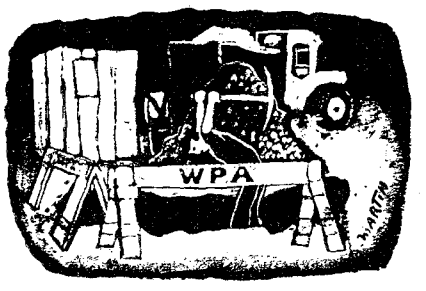
By Newton Arvin

THE spirit that has planned and made a practical reality of the National Writers' Congress is, in one sense, something quite without precedent in American literature. It is—or was, two years ago—a wholly new thing for American writers to come together in this way, not only as citizens, as responsible members of a democratic society, but consciously and deliberately in their role as writers, as representatives of the literary profession, to express themselves with a collective voice on the public questions that confront them and all other men, to take what steps they can and will in defense of culture and freedom, to align themselves as a body with all the humane forces that are working to preserve, to extend, and to enrich democracy. I have heard of nothing of the sort taking place, in all these three centuries or so, until 1935 and 1936, in New York, in Minneapolis, in San Francisco. No writers gathered together, in the early colonial times, to take their stand as writers against the oligarchy of Massachusetts Bay; there was no writers' congress on the eve of the American Revolution; the men of letters of the fifties made no common organizational front against the barbarities of the Fugitive Slave Law and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. As easy, almost, to imagine Roger Williams or Philip Freneau or Henry Thoreau on a picket line as to imagine this!

These congresses represent a break, certainly, with the American tradition of individual action on the part of literary men or of action on their part simply in their general capacity as citizens. It is a break with that tradition, and a necessary break, for not until today—but today at last—have the things which as writers we stand for been quite flagrantly, quite undeniably, and quite disastrously threatened by the forces working toward coercion and inequality. A new and higher stage of the literary consciousness has been reached now that, for both defensive and constructive ends, American writers have come to recognize the advantages of common action; and we need neither expect nor wish to find precedent for it in the letter of our national inheritance.

The *spirit* of that inheritance is another matter, and if the form of these meetings and the organizations that emerge from them are without the verbal sanction of our history, the essential purposes that have led us to meet and to organize are purposes that, however modified and enlarged by time and experience, we have in common with a long series of men and women in all the generations of American literature. This is not the real reason, I know, why these purposes are worth struggling for; they are worth the struggle because they are good things in themselves. Yet it has become a commonplace in progressive literary circles—and it ought to have become a commonplace—that every ally must be pressed into service, that some of the most dependable of these allies are the writers of the past, and that our present aims are the culmination of a long native development. One could wish that the knee tribute paid to these commonplaces were more frequently paid than it is in solid and substantial ways. Liberal and radical writers as a group have not yet taken the lesson to heart, and the exploration of the national past is still too largely left to the takers of notes, to the G-men of scholarship, and to fascist-minded patrioteers. It is not a sentimental provincialism that we are asking for, it is certainly not for a romantic nationalism; it is only for the sort of native cultural consciousness without which, as our European fellow-writers so profoundly understand, a true internationalism is impossible. We ought to hear much from left-wing writers, as we do, of Pushkin and of Dostoyevski, of Rimbaud and of Proust, of Goethe and of Thomas Mann. We have not yet heard quite enough—or have heard too largely from the wrong quarters—of Thomas Hooker and John Woolman, of Joel Barlow and Frances Wright, of Parker, of Howells, of Hamlin Garland.

There is a negative reason, if no other, why we who affiliate ourselves with such a congress as this should regard it as part of our responsibility to deepen our familiarity with the literary record of the American experience. We are already hearing about that record from the Right, and from the Center that bends toward the Right, and we shall hear more and more in the months and years that are approaching. We are hearing and shall hear American writers cited like scripture—sometimes justly, oftener distortedly—in support of illiberal principles, of the spirit of caste, of distrust toward the people, or at least of indifference and what is called poise. What knowledge we may have of Stendhal or of Strindberg will avail us precious little when these things are said. Only a few months since, a book appeared of which the purport, I gather, was that if Emerson had been alive today he would have been a root-and-branch antagonist of the New Deal and a thick-and-thin supporter of the Hearst-Republican candidate for the Presidency, Governor Landon of fading memory. The book was an oddity, and, for all I know, it may have had no serious influence; it may have plunged to the literary bottom with the speed and the sureness of a sinker, leaving only a few momentary bubbles behind it. But it was a serious symptom nonetheless, and if it had happened to slay its thousands and tens of thousands, how many of us would have been prepared to deal with it critically and informedly?



Martin

Its author, in any case, was no mere isolated eccentric, and if we on the Left, and the Center that bends toward the Left, fail to make the most of our national past, we may be sure that there are those who will not so fail. They will not, partly because, of co[urse] that past is by no means all of a piece. T[here] is an authoritarian, an illiberal, a philist[ine] strain in it as truly as there is a democra[tic] strain. Some of the notable writers of t[he] seventeenth century were Puritan theocra[tic] preachers in whose eyes the natural man born, as one of them said, "full of all s[in] full as a toad is of poison, as full as e[ver] skin can hold"; and they proposed that natural man under strict wa[tch] were American-born writers w[ho] their considerable powers to t[he] during the American Revolu[tion] of our early writers of fictio[n] looked upon the Jeffersonia[n] masses askance and stru[ck] writers of genius defended [the] tution of the slave-holding So[uth] cated an agitation of the painful que[stion]. In the times since the Civil War there have not been wanting men of talent to do publicity for our business oligarchs, our jingoistic politicians, our soldiers of empire. During the last generation especially there have been writers who have propagated a blighting misanthropy or, like Belial, have "counsell'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth."

We do not for a moment deny that these things are true and real. We maintain only that they are the negative, the obstructive, the sterile aspect that reality always presents on one of its sides. We maintain that the real meaning of the American social and cultural

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adventure has been its democratic meaning, and that one of the truest things to be said about American literature is that it has reflected, over a period of three centuries, the gradual maturing, rationalization, and deepening of the democratic idea. The men of the seventeenth century who seem to us to have had the future with them were not the stewards of the Massachusetts theocracy, the John Cottons and the Increase Mathers, but the primitive democrats who set their faces against them; were Thomas Hooker of Hartford, Roger Williams of Providence, and John Wise of Ipswich. The ancestors we recognize in that century are the Connecticut state-builder who held that "the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people," and that "the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance"; the Rhode Island seeker who held that "the sovereign power of all civil authority is founded in the consent of the people"; the Essex County minister who held that "by a natural right all men are born free, and nature having set all men upon a level and made them equals, no servitude or subjection can be conceived without inequality."

We regard it as no accident that the book in which John Wise laid down this and other democratic propositions was reprinted, after sixty years, on the eve of the Revolution and read by dozens of men who were about to organize Committees of Correspondence and to take up arms against arbitrary authority. In the years that had elapsed since, in 1639, the Fundamental Orders had been adopted at ford, the idea of democracy had under- a process both of clarification and of chment. The clarification had been accom- ied mainly by the intellectual ferment of Age of Reason: the enrichment was rather work of that increasing fineness of senti- that warmer and warmer humanitarian n, which was the other face of the th century. What had begun by be- e time of Hooker and Williams, a simple civic conviction, with the es of protestantism, had become, Franklin, Paine, and Jefferson, n, on one side, in unison with the of the enlightenment; a conception of ocracy which bore down hardest on the right of all men to intellectual independence, to liberty of opinion and discussion, to the free pursuit of knowledge and truth. On another side, the conception of democracy had become, by the time of John Woolman and Philip Freneau, a passionate sentiment of human equality, not so much in the moral or intellectual as in the personal and spiritual sense; a revulsion from the miseries and the cruelties that flow from inequality; an aspiration toward what Woolman called "the true harmony of mankind" and what Freneau called "the lovely philanthropic scheme."

These were the men who made the American Revolution, so to say, ethically possible. Could the great writers of the Golden Day add anything essential to what they had inherited from the democratic thinkers and poets who had preceded them? In theory, perhaps, they could and did add little; in conduct, in growing insight, in human realization, they could and did add much. There is no novelty in saying that it was in two directions that their thought and feeling chiefly moved. What was strongest in the Transcendentalists, in Channing, in Emerson, in Thoreau, was the idea of liberty rather than of equality or brotherhood, but it was an idea of liberty rooted in a deeply poetic sense of the dignity, even the sacredness, of personality, of the individual human being, of the man just as a man; it was an idea that found the spectacle of slavery, of exploitation, of whatever cramped and limited the free individual, intolerable; and it enhanced enormously the whole democratic program by its expansion into what Channing called "self-cultivation," into the Emersonian passion for self-fulfillment, into Thoreau's obsession with the intrinsic quality of individual life.

These men remained democrats of a somewhat chilly and unsociable sort, though that did not keep them from taking up cudgels for the fugitive slave and for John Brown. What was needed to humanize still further the democratic way of life was a spirit that one hardly finds in transcendentalism at its purest; a spirit at once plainer and more robust, more sociable and more profane; a spirit for which the sentiment of equality has become a humane and homely practice, and the sentiment of brotherhood a neighborly reality. That spirit was not wanting, we may be sure, to Roger Williams or John Wise, to Paine or Woolman; but it remained for the generation that produced Lincoln to realize widely and deeply the democratic affection for the plain man, the preference for what in humanity is common and simple to what is rare and singular, the hearty sense of that inherently equal companionship in which ordinary men and women can live and work together. This is the spirit that comes to flower in the unsophisticated ballads and idylls of Whittier; that endeared Longfellow, gentleman and scholar that he was, to so many thousands of unlearned average men; that furnished Lowell with the best inspirations he had; that broke out so grandly and musically in the chants of *Leaves of Grass;* and that, dominating as it did the life of the Middle Border, sank ineradicably into the minds of Howells and Mark Twain.

Not even then, however, had our own current thought about democracy taken on its fuller contours. What was still needed, for one thing, was that the men of the end of the century and of the Roosevelt and Wilson eras should discover, as some of them did, that democracy is not inconsistent with the naturalistic view of things; that the democratic program need not be defended on theological or rationalistic or transcendental grounds, but is harmonious with what we know of physics and biology; that modern science is not only not destructive of that program but on the contrary a powerful lever below it. It was as a result of this, among other forces, that writers came to see at last how bogus a thing democracy is until it has been given a firm material base; until merely political and moral "rights" have been made tangible, for all men, in those physical means of existence without which life is brutish, biologically and humanly mean and wretched; until the formal democracy of the ballot and the caucus has been given the honest substance of economic liberty and equality. As time went on, it became oppressively clear that powerful and selfish forces in American life stood stubbornly across the path that led in this direction; and the intensifying awareness that whole classes of men, cut off from all the solid benefits of democracy, must be given access to them—this awareness was what gave its most urgent drive, in the eighties and nineties, to the work of Howells, of Bellamy, of Hamlin Garland; what unified and concentrated, a little later, the novels of Jack London, Upton Sinclair, and Robert Herrick; gleaned fitfully through the turbulent patterns of Dreiser's and Anderson's fictions; inspirited some of the strongest verse of Lindsay and Sandburg; and stiffened the criticism of Randolph Bourne and Van Wyck Brooks.

The good democrat, as these men came to understand, cannot hope to rest on his oars; not, at any rate, in an industrial society torn apart by conflicting interests. To make real the whole purport of the democratic plan—its social, its economic, its ethical, its cultural purpose—is not, as they saw, idly to accept its partial conquests in the past, but to work for its full achievement in the future. Now that we can see how all the energies of history are laboring toward that achievement, we can regard ourselves, without vanity and without delusion, as the legitimate descendants of those writers; can invoke their names and their utterances when we will, in our own struggles; can say unaffectedly with the greatest of democratic poets:

I speak the password primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.

To John Lenthier

(Killed in action, Spain, February 27, 1937)

No wreaths but such wild blooms
as withered lie between the lines,
the no-man's land of yesterday,
to honor those at rest in undug tombs—

No wreaths but such rare seeds
as live and grow in comrades' hearts,
imbued with fertile warmth:
in memory of dreams grown into deeds.

No music but a song—
no organ drone to dirge they've gone:
alone the rifles' brief, prophetic crack
a soldier's due and prelude to attack
before the dawn . . .

FRANK O'FLAHERTY,
La Pasionaria Hospital, Murcia, Spain.

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READERS' FORUM

The career of Michael Williams—News from Spain "fit to print"—A cabbie goes to Spain

● It is with growing amazement that I have followed the frenzied activities of Michael Williams, the editor of the *Commonweal,* in his tirades against the American press. He has accused this press (I wonder, could he have meant Hearst, too?) of outright partiality for the loyalist side in Spain.

And, finally, he has asked for fairness in press dispatches. Of course, only fools will fail to see that Mr. Williams does not really want fairness for both sides. The fascist Mr. Williams would like to sway the American press (or at least that portion of it which is not yet shameless in an outright manner) entirely in favor of his side, the fascist side.

Furthermore, it is to laugh when one knows that Williams is a renegade socialist, and a one-time friend of Upton Sinclair.

Moreover, those who have come across the rather unsavory portrait of this Mr. Williams as painted by his friend and former benefactor, Upton Sinclair, in *The American Outpost,* will be still more amazed. This book appeared in 1932, and shows Mr. Williams to be an unscrupulous opportunist, a self-seeker and false friend, and one who climbed to his present position entirely on the ladder of treachery. Surely, Sinclair was aware of the libel laws in this country when he wrote about Mr. Williams in his book; furthermore, five years have already passed since the book's publication, and so far I have not heard of any denial of the truth of this portrait from the Mr. Williams under discussion.

Personally, I doubt if anyone could very well envy Mr. Williams his reward, that is, the editorship of the *Commonweal;* if he is a Judas with an easy conscience, that is his affair. But one is stung into fury to see this modern Tartuffe, this wolf in sheep's clothing, pose as one to whom the right means everything, as a seeker of the truth. And also, in view of the ample space given Mr. Williams's utterances by all the press, I feel that to make him a present of our silence would be asking too much of human endurance, and would fall in too easily with the plans of our "truth-seeker."

ALEXANDER GODIN.

A Tough Strike

● The conditions in Lewiston and Auburn, Me., where shoe workers are on strike, are unspeakable. Children are in dire need of food, cod-liver oil, and clothing. Funds are needed for milk, orange juice, and other proper food.

The strikers have been supported by assessments on wages of shoe workers in the organized portions of the industry, but the slack season is here, and funds are diminishing as the need for them increases. Help must come from groups and individuals outside Maine. The few liberals in the state have been more than generous, but their help is insufficient.

The Lewiston-Auburn strikers are fighting not only for themselves but for all unorganized workers in the entire district, and their defeat would be the defeat of the working class here for months, if not years. Each of the manufacturers is resisting the union to the last ditch. It may be many weeks before the strike is settled, and it will be many more before these people are able to take care of themselves without help. While the strike has been going on they have not been able to meet bills. Landlords, grocers, and insurance agents will not wait—even though children are starving.

Until we are able to establish an office, our address is 1584 Forest Ave., Portland, Me., and checks may be made out to the Citizens' Relief Committee for Shoe Strikers, or to Jo Pattangall, Chairman of the Committee.

JO PATTANGALL.

William Hermandez

Miner

News Coverage of Spain

● Two items of Spanish news coverage are worth noting for your readers who don't see New York papers. The first was brought to light in the editorial columns of the New York *Post,* which printed side by side the versions of G. L. Steer's May 19 dispatch as printed in the New York *Times* and the London *Times.* (Both papers get identic dispatches from Steer.) The story was of a rebel attack in the Basque country. The New York *Times* version was cut and altered drastically so that the following were omitted: (1) identification of the attack planes as German; (2) that a church was bombed by the rebels; (3) that the rebel planes deliberately and repeatedly attacked an isolated shelter for non-combatants. There were a number of other alterations and distortions in the same story.

The second item also refers to a dispatch by G. L. Steer, in the New York *Times* of June 4. This is one of the most significant stories to come out of Spain in the last fortnight, as the dispatch itself virtually says, but the *Times* buried it without a reference in the smallest sub-head. Steer tells how a captured rebel, in a "frank" conversation, told him that no German infantrymen were in action on that front, although German artillerymen were. Steer goes on:

"He added, however, without being pressed, that all officers told him and his comrades that large contingents of German, in addition to Italian infantry, had been disembarked recently at San Sebastian, the latest group arriving no longer ago than last Sunday [May 30], preparatory to 'a final push' along the Bay of Biscay coast.

"This was a startling unsolicited corroboration of information that reached the Basque intelligence service two days ago but hitherto had not been reported by this correspondent owing to the grave nature of the allegations involved."

GUY FAWKES, JR.

Her Husband Went to Spain

● BOB WOLK and the missus lived happily enough together despite the fact that a hackie's life is no bed of roses. It's tough to be hackie in the first place and it's tough on the missus, too, especially if in addition to your regular rolling you feel that the only hope you have is in a union and you are sure you've got to help organize or you know damn well it won't be done. So you don't get home much and it's hard on the family ties.

The life itself was tougher on the missus than it was on Bob. He was no soft touch in any man's language. A hitch in the army followed by four years in the navy had boiled him hard, and pushing a hack through the streets of New York is no job for a lily.

The going got even rougher when he joined the party. The missus was a swell gal, but she just couldn't see the need of his becoming a Communist, especially if it took away some more of the few precious hours they had together.

So life swam along in the small Wolk household, peacefully, quietly, and except for the daily battle with the hackie-baiting bluecoats who infest the streets, without conflict or hatred, except, again, for the class which forced a hackie to stay away from home so much in order to make a living.

He was standing around with a lot of other hack pushers when the story of the Spanish rebellion splashed itself all over the front pages.

As the late summer waned and the boys and girls of Madrid hurled themselves into the trenches armed with pistols against machine guns, shovels against rifles, and bare hands against bayonets, Bob Wolk grew more and more determined that a man with his military and naval experience was needed more in Spain than even his wife needed him.

He broached the subject one night at supper. Jestingly and lightly, he brought his idea to the surface.

His wife hopped on the idea with both feet.

"Well, we'll see," he said ending the conversation—for the time.

That was only the beginning. He brought it again, and again. At first the missus met it w laughter, but soon fear grew in her heart, and s failed to laugh.

Soon his sallies were met with grim, tired silence —or what was worse, with grimmer, more silent tears. Then came the storm period. She screamed that he was not to leave her—he was not to go and she awakened in him a resulting storm of passionate protest. Bitterly they fought each other. Their wills locked in a terrible contest wrestling with each other, tearing at each other's defenses, stabbing at each other's heart.

On that last day before he left, the storm reached its highest pitch, a fury that was almost liquid in its acid hate. He sailed and left her in the depths of a horror that blackened her life for three days.

And then a light dawned upon her—a light that brought back reason and love and trust.

But let her tell it as she told it in the office of the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion after she had received word that her husband had been killed fighting with the battalion on the Jarama front.

"Three days after he sailed, I realized that I had tortured him and that he was right—he had to go to Spain. There was nothing for me to do but follow the path he had made. I joined the Communist Party. I had to take his place in the fight here now that he was gone.

"I wrote him a letter telling him of what I had done. I was proud of him, and happy, and I wanted him to know it. I never heard from him until I received this notification of his death.

"Of course, I miss him terribly. I loved him. But I would not be unhappy now if I knew that he knew that I was carrying on his fight for happiness and freedom and democracy where he had to drop it.

"All I want now is to know that he read my letter."

PHIL BARD.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

The second study of "Middletown"—Albert Rhys Williams on the U.S.S.R. and Ortega on Spain

IF one had to find a quick slogan for summarizing the way in which science is effective, I should propose the formula: stooping to conquer. Such is the experimental method at its best. Insofar as is humanly possible, it begins by *listening* rather than by *asserting*. It is postponed assertion, somewhat as investment is said to be postponed consumption.

The Lynds are expert listeners.* Their method makes of us all their laboratory. They use the representative town of Muncie, Ind., as their specific field of study, and as control, their study of the same town ten years ago. One man figures out, let us say, that "everything will turn out well in the end." And so does the next man, and the next. But an important qualitative change takes place when you have added up all these quantities, thereby getting a kind of statistical view of this homely little invention.

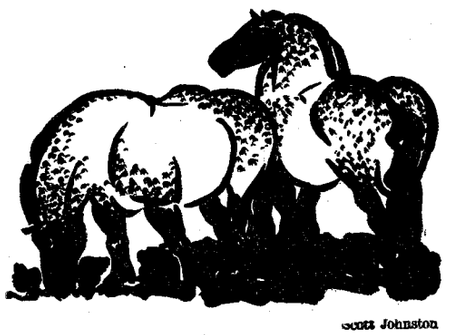
The Lynds have done, without the note of guying, what Mencken and Nathan used to do in their collection of Americana. And the omission of this note makes considerable difference. What Mencken and Nathan did polemically, and Sinclair Lewis did inspirationally, they complete by the strategy of stooping to conquer.

As a result, they have given us two books the earlier and present studies of "Middletown") contributing greatly to the charting of American mores. We already had the *topographical maps surveying the hills* and valleys of America. Here we get a survey of the country's mental contours.

The findings could hardly be saluted as new. Anyone who has surveyed America either from the standpoint of the earlier æsthetic criticism (culminating in expatriation, actual or symbolic) or from the standpoint of current political emphasis will probably feel, in reading *Middletown in Transition*, that he is more often being reminded than informed. The general outlines of the map are already known. The service of these authors is (a) in giving it greater precision and (b) in the working attitude which their study embodies. The second is particularly of value as a hint to our formal and informal propagandists. For the criticism, radical as it seems in its implications, is voiced by investigators who are eager to make sure that the bonds of participation between investigators and investigated are not broken. The emphasis, in other words, is not upon exposure, but upon analysis, with the result that, although the analysis is in effect a drastic exposure, the stylistic change in emphasis prevents the breaking of contact. I can imagine Middletown being troubled by the work; but I cannot imagine it being furious.

The book being over five hundred pages in length, and being largely an assemblage of graphs and statistics written out, I shall not make a pretense of giving it in summary. What one sees, on the whole, is the spectacle of a people attempting to handle new situations by symbols developed under past and different situations, people who still tend to look upon the dislocations of capitalism as an "act of God," who have worked out a bewildering hash of religious and secular coördinates, who strive hard to be friendly under an economy that too often makes for anger (and thereby become all the angrier when their friendliness is frustrated), whose weakness for scapegoats is resisted mainly by lack of some rationalization speciously complete (a lack making it awkward for them to deflect all their resentment upon one fixed symbolic victim). One sees in the main the struggle to form the mind by the acceptance of ailing institutions. This is a disastrous struggle, since the tendency of the individual to locate himself with relation to an institutional frame is in itself *natural* and *wholesome* enough—you can safely think of changing institutions only when you have some *alternative* institutional basis upon which to erect your purposes, as for instance the basis you may derive from the body of anti-capitalist criticism, a criticism rooted in organization and method—but the ailing institutions, as the Lynds make obvious, themselves serve to perpetuate lines of thinking that obscure the issues.

There is one fundamental problem in a book of this sort. The investigators are, by the very nature of their investigation, looking for the typical. And when you have finished, you begin to ask yourself whether there might be some important difference between the typical and history. Middletown, for instance, went 59 percent for Roosevelt in the last election. Yet this shift from Republicanism is not adequately foreshadowed in the Lynds' survey. Insofar as "Middletown" is typical of America, and this survey is typical of Middletown, the material would have led you to expect a national sweep for Landon.



Scott Johnston

We are left with two possibilities. Perhaps the choice of Roosevelt over Landon was more spectacular than significant. The individual voter, for instance, may have been *almost* undecided whether to vote one way or the other, and *just barely did* finally decide for Roosevelt (this tenuousness adding up, in the deceptiveness of statistical aggregates, to a landslide, quite as the small difference in percentage of votes adds up to a blunt all-but-Maine-and-Vermont in the electoral college). Or else: there may be something about the typical that is itself misleading, as a way of historical gauging and forecasting.

I propose that the second of these possibilities should be considered, in approaching all surveys of this sort. The typical is, in a sense, the relatively *inert*. It is *what people answer when presented with a questionnaire.* It is a *quantitative* rather than a *qualitative* test, since it assigns to everyone the same rating, regardless of his activity. And though history is moved by quantities, is not this movement accomplished by those people, rare rather than typical, most awake to new *qualities* which the changing quantities have brought forth? In other words, might not the *single song of one poet,* under certain conditions, put us on the track of something that the *typical platitudes of a group* could give us no inkling of?

In any case, one thing is certain: those hired to sing for the Landon perspective had a painful job of it—and those hired to sing for the Roosevelt perspective had a much easier time of it. The unhired songs further to the left went practically unheard—but one may believe that they will gradually make themselves heard, and that they will act *precisely because they are not typical,* containing rather the *emergent* factors, such all-important trends of history as the inertly typical conceals from us.

Another problem is suggested by the subtitle, "a study in cultural *conflicts.*" Following leads provided by Bergson, we may note that every state of moral or social "balance" can, by the very nature of language, be analyzed as a conflict between opposing tendencies. Thus even Newton moralistically plotted the curve of planetary motion in terms of opposing centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. And Aristotle, by dint of patient thinking, made the phenomenal discovery that when something is just right in its proportions, it is neither too big nor too small. All moral journeys go between Scylla and Charybdis.

Are not conflicts, in this technical sense, inevitable and everywhere? Can you possibly analyze *any* social manifestation except in terms of a conflict? Many of the conflicts noted by the Lynds seem to me of this linguistically engendered sort. Every state or local portion of a state, for instance, must face in

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* MIDDLETOWN IN TRANSITION: A STUDY IN CULTURAL CONFLICTS, *by Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd. Harcourt, Brace & Co.* $5.

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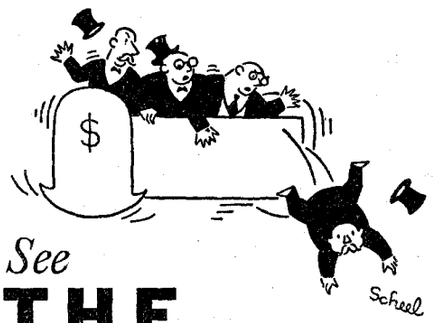

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some form a conflict between the attempt to keep down the tax rate and the attempt to promote public enterprises by taxation. Or every state must face a conflict between ideals of work and ideals of leisure, between individual preferences and group necessities, etc. Many of such conflicts noted by the Lynds do not seem to me quite on the same plane with the inner contradictions engendered by capitalism's dilemma in trying to develop mass production without reordering its property relationships to facilitate mass consumption.

An explicit acceptance of the Marxist analysis would, it seems to me, form a sounder basis upon which one might proceed to make distinctions between these two kinds of conflicts, the conflicts caused by a system working against itself and the conflicts arising linguistically from the fact that *any* adjustment must be expressed, in analytic terms, as the juggling of opposites. Once we have carried out such a weeding, it is true, we may very well find that the essential contradictions of capitalism serve greatly to aggravate conflicts all along the line, causing dislocations that turn all consciousness into dilemmas (a theme that Norbert Guterman, in collaboration with Lefebvre, has exploited strikingly in *La Conscience Mystifiée*). But we may be warned that not even socialism can alter the nature of analytic speech in accordance with mystical ideals of non-conflicting unity. The balance of the tight-rope walker, as translated into analytic terms, is attained by adjusting the opposing weight of the right and left sides of the body. And so, in any mature society, there will be balancings of individual and group, manual workers and brain workers, industry and agriculture, or among regional divisions. A "good" state is not one that can eliminate them (the notion of eliminating them is meaningless, unless you are proposing to eliminate language itself as an instrument for the analysis of interrelationships). A "good" state is one that can eliminate some of the obviously man-made contradictions as contained in the capitalist distribution of profits. The others, arising from our position as mere parts of a universal totality, will remain, to form the stimulus for the "symbolic bridges" erected by thinkers and poets. The Lynds show us a people who instinctively grasp this necessity, who know that man's proper enterprise must be expended in developing modes of thought that enable him to *accept* the world, but who are tragically engaged in trying to extend such modes of acceptance to institutions that can and should be *rejected*. The descriptive and admonitory value of such a study cannot be praised too highly. KENNETH BURKE.

Here Are the Answers

THE SOVIETS, *by Albert Rhys Williams. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $3.*

YOU know the statements someone always makes: "Yes, but you know they're all secretly grafting. . . ." "Yes, but you know Stalin rides 'round in an armored car. . . ."

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"Yes, but you know that brains ought to rule—and that all the brains are shot. . . ." "Yes, but you know there's no freedom and you couldn't have a Union Square parade asking for capitalism back if you wanted it. . . ." Albert Rhys Williams takes all these questions, and any others you have thought of and heard asked; takes eighty-eight of them, and answers them, fully, briefly, in two kinds of print: one large, if you only want to know the outlines of the answer, and one smaller, with historical background and sociological explanation, anecdotes, and pen-pictures.

In this book, which we have awaited for seven years, and which the present reviewer watched grow through mushroom hunts and pumpkin gatherings, ball games on the beach of the Pacific and real work in a wooden shack just back of the beach, Rhys Williams has a tale to tell; and, excited and warmed by the sights and sounds he has seen and heard, he tells it. You know you are in good hands, because Williams was one of the first Americans to go to the Soviet Union; he lived there eight years, in towns and in the country among the peasants, holidaying and working, making speeches from a truck with Lenin as the Red Army went up to the front, or sitting around the samovar with peasants of countless nationalities discussing their *tempora* and their *mores*.

Do you want to know about the early history of dancing in the Soviet Union and how Czarina Anna would slap the face of a courtier who failed to keep time with the music? Do you want to know Stalin's slogans on technique? Or the reasons for certain changes in foreign policy? Or why all the energy of the fly-swatting department, for instance, may be spent putting out anti-fly posters, leaving none for the production of tangle-foot fly-paper? Williams tells you. Or maybe you want something more serious: the nature and workings of the Third International; a description and history of the many school systems that have been tried and scrapped; the Communist Party, its nature, organization, functions, and powers; or trade, money, finance. Williams gives it you. And all good-naturedly, honestly, with indulgence for the weaknesses and mistakes and troubles (which are not glossed over), as one is indulgent with a small boy who has not yet learned to eat his porridge without slopping it all over. A good parlor game would be to think up a question on the Soviet Union that Rhys Williams has not already thought up and answered here.

The form of the book—the first of its kind since Williams's own former pamphlet, *76 Questions and Answers,* which sold over a million copies, is peculiarly right for its day. General books on Russia have been written; many of the special fields have been adequately covered: medicine, law, theater, economics, foreign affairs, women. What people need now is a thesaurus. If you know something but have forgotten details—and how often those of us who have been in the Soviet Union are asked technical questions we can't answer—this is your book. Or if you know nothing and want

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There's always that vexing question of impartiality. It's a little like asking if you are impartial about the weather. Some critics write as though anyone who said the sun shone was biased and anyone who contended it rained was possessed of some divine gift of objectivity. Williams describes the weather, and when it's bad he tells you what caused it. It is more important to understand and explain than it is to praise or condemn. Lenin said, "It is more important that we try out one experiment in socialism, completely, to its conclusion, than whether we succeed or fail."

The criticisms one has heard about the Soviet Union, particularly recently, are answered here, and in their context. The famous one about all "totalitarian" states (Florinsky, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, *et al*) is debunked in one telling sentence; the importance of the figure of Stalin (which bothered Gide, Paul Palmer, etc.) to this simple peasant people is explained. And why art and literature cannot rise higher than their audiences—of millions. Williams shows the background of much of what is occurring, but he also gives an up-to-the-minute picture. And from it all you come to understand that liberty is not the mere right to form another political party or get up on a soap-box and ask for the return of capitalism; it is the embodiment, in law and institutions, custom and habit, of an increasingly full life for many millions. That it is the people that matter, not mere abstractions of right and justice, Williams's book makes perfectly plain; that time is a dimension and that the new culture, being built into the blood and bone of this country, can't be measured any longer by our old conceptions. ELLA WINTER.

Ortega on Spain

INVERTEBRATE SPAIN, *by José Ortega y Gasset. W. W. Norton. $2.75.*

THE brilliant parallels and epigrams of Ortega weave a rich embroidery over Spain and Europe, which almost completely conceals basic issues and conflicts. It is no wonder that reactionaries, and liberals wishing further detachment, were charmed by *The Revolt of the Masses, The Modern Theme,* and *Invertebrate Spain.* In the first book, it is the masses which are bringing Europe to ruin; in the second, it is the young hot-heads who are leading the world to its doom, having supplanted the graybeards who are far more capable—for didn't Rome prosper in their hands? In the third, on the other hand, the trouble is that Spain has no masses because it has no leaders, or rather, has no leaders because it has no masses. Besides, Spain has been given over to mass rule and, at the same time, its leaders have been far too superior to the masses. If you can't put these notions together, you are supposed to admire the

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author all the more. Somehow, the most unverifiable, irritating, and paralyzing ideas ever invented in western Europe find their way into Ortega's books. For example, Reaction is only the disillusion of revolutionaries, and history moves in cycles. Or, "A successful international policy, a policy of high enterprise, is the only thing that creates a fruitful internal policy—which is always, in the last analysis, a rather shallow affair." Again, the decay of modern Spain (sic) is due to the cooling and attenuation of the Visigoth blood, while the ascendancy of France is rooted in the vitality of the Franks—a vitality which can be retrieved only by sinking again into barbarism. Why? You have to take Ortega's scintillating word for it. Science, except for Germany and its intellectual colonies abroad, has long since abandoned such delusions. Ortega takes note of science, of course, as of everything else, but only to suck from a few gaudy and casual flowers, and he fails to see how serious the matter is—that you can't be a political analyst and a butterfly too. After all, thousands of men are dying in Spain, and were about to die when Ortega wrote these essays. They were about to die for the ideals and objectives which Ortega has sworn to support. Yet Ortega must talk of sectionalism, particularism, and decay as if they were innate divisions and destinies of the "collective soul" of Spain, in complete neglect of the isolation, privation, and the specific miseries and expedients of the various provinces.

There are, to be sure, certain unforgettable passages in the present book. For example, Ortega explains that the Spaniards "today are not so much a people as a cloud of dust that was left hovering in the air when a great people went galloping down the high road of history." Apparently Ortega is wistfully reminiscent of the time when a handful of Spaniards betrayed and shot a whole nation of Aztecs, and nostalgic for glories most of which never existed. And the only flaw in this eloquent sentence is that it isn't true, and that it grossly libels one of the most heroic peoples in modern times.

One can agree with his basic distinction between democracy and liberalism. A democracy may pass laws, particularly in transitional periods of stress, restricting greatly the rights of the individual. But this is a formal distinction, after all. What Ortega fails to indicate is that, though the *demos* may restrict the rights of the majority of individuals, the financial barons and overweening landlords are far more likely to do so.

There is also the nostalgia for a stratified feudal society. In such a society, those on the lower rungs of the hierarchy would gladly accord their service to their superiors, and without shame, for shame arises only from the absurd doctrine of "equality." If the natural inequality of men is frankly admitted, on the other hand, how beautiful everything becomes! Inferiors will not receive wages, for how could one pay for personal fealty and service with money? No, the seigneur will take responsibility for the needs of his

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As it is, certain tendencies of his thought come perilously close to fascism. Fortunately, he recoils just in time. Fascism, he says, does not wish to revive the values of the past, nor has it any values of its own. Its chief characteristics are violence and illegitimacy and though "it is master of the present," since the aristocratic props of legality have broken down all over Europe, "it must go on living merely from day to day" and has no future. Still, Ortega does not see the class basis of fascism and refuses, out of pride perhaps, to say what everyone knows. But his eclecticism is more striking than his originality. This is why he is dangerous, and important. He is deeply conversant with the neo-Scholastic tradition and with German writers such as Nietzsche and Max Scheler. His ideas have, therefore, much support from sources which menace popular movements all over the world. Wall street interests and atavistic Catholics have taken to him with fervor. It is a pity that Ortega, the defender of the republic, should keep such company.

PHILIP CARTER.

★

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The Paris Commune again in a Soviet film— Art from Greenwich Village and points west

NEW YORK'S Cameo Theater is now showing *Paris Commune* (Amkino), which is one of the most ambitious historical films to come from the Soviet Union. Its importance to us and its contemporary significance cannot be underestimated. It is thrilling to contemplate the reaction of the people of Madrid and Valencia to *Paris Commune* when it is shown there, where the theaters have become social-discussion centers. The connection between the struggle of the Spanish workers to defend their liberty against fascism and that of their Parisian brothers who sixty years ago defended themselves against the reactionary-imperial Thiers government aided by the Bismarckian invaders, makes this new Soviet film important for all of us.

The historical care given the production is impressive. Director Gregory Roshal presents not only an emotional and melodramatic film, but an exposition of the political structure of the Commune, portraits of the leaders, and a discussion of the "tragic mistakes" of the Commune. From an emotional or physical point of view the *Paris Commune* may fail, but it is not that aspect that is important.

This, of course, brings to mind the Kozintsev and Trauberg early effort on the Paris Commune called *New Babylon*. That film, as you may recall, was beautifully conceived and executed. Moskvin's wonderful photography contributed in no small measure to the total effect of the film, which was built on the romantic idea of *Sturm und Drang*. That may have been more exciting, but less valuable. *New Babylon* had virtuosity and emotional impact, but it gave no indication of the political character of the Commune.

Roshal has made every effort to avoid this style. On the other hand, he had the difficult problem of popularizing the story. To this end, he introduced the love element. It is here that he fails. But not to the extent indicated by many of the New York film reviewers. *Paris Commune,* with all it mistakes, with all the things that fail to come off, is a distinguished film and, I repeat, an important one.

It may be unconventional to discuss the opinions of other critics, but the case of Frank S. Nugent of the New York *Times* deserves notice. He had every right to think *Paris Commune* tedious and dull. But he had no right deliberately to defame the heroic French workers—to say that the "film-makers charitably ignore the debauchery, brutality, and vandalism of the commune, which did, after all, set fire to public buildings, massacre hostages, destroy the palace of the Tuileries, the Thiers library, and the Vendome column—it is unable to hide . . . inklings of the stupidity, ineptness, and confusion of the revolution's leaders." There hasn't been anything like this since the infamous articles in *Harper's Weekly* during the last century and the vile and stupid lies of the *Times's* own William Carney writing from Spain today. How appropriate, in this connection, is Marx's letter to Liebknecht in which he says, "You must not believe a word of all the stuff you may see in the papers about the internal events in Paris. It is all lies and deception. Never has the vileness of bourgeois journalism displayed itself more brilliantly."

PETER ELLIS.

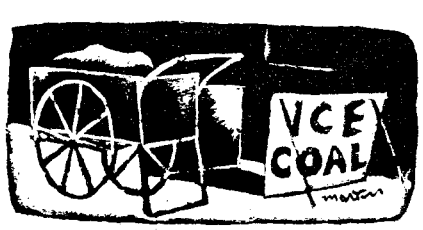
THE FINE ARTS

WHILE the galleries around New York's 57th Street are rapidly closing their doors for the summer, down in Greenwich Village new activity is apparent.

On MacDougal Street and under the windows of MacDougal Alley's expensive studios, the artists have been holding their spring outdoor exhibition and sale. The fact that dozens of artists are still forced to hawk their paintings like street peddlers is proof that the W.P.A. Federal Art Project has not been able to take care of all the artists, and that further curtailment would cause havoc among those who have in the last years had a small measure of security.

Even the Summer exhibition of the permanent art collection opening at the Whitney Museum reinforces this fact. The artists represented include the leaders of American painting today, yet many of them are even now working on federal projects. A new purchase is Louis Ribak's *Home Relief Station,* which furnishes an excellent example of the transition of contemporary painting from static recording to active social criticism.

A comparison of this permanent collection with the new show of midwestern artists, just opened at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York, reveals great changes in American life in the last decade. A fundamental cleavage, brought about by the crisis of 1929, distinguishes the new generation from the preceding one, which received its training, for the most part, in Europe. The post-war generation, even after its return from Europe and its exultant rediscovery of the American scene, was occupied chiefly with æsthetic problems and their application to American subject matter rather than to any new interpretation of American life. Their emphasis on sensuous values and compositional organization raised the æsthetic standard of American painting.



Martin

The new generation of painters is intent on analyzing and criticizing American life. The rise of regionalism in painting, while in many respects reactionary, has had the good effect of directing attention toward artists in other parts of the United States. In the past, there prevailed a snobbish indifference to American art outside of New York, along with the fashion for French modernism in the art galleries. Now there is an awakened interest in our American forebears in painting. In the long run, however, I believe that Stuart Davis's calligraphic interpretations of American streets will be judged as completely American in expression as are the illustrations of American life by John Stewart Curry and Grant Wood. But until quite recently, artists in both currents of influence have approached life statically, or at most satirically.

A new feeling pervades the vigorous work of the twenty-one mid-Western artists at the A.C.A. Gallery. These painters hail from Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa; nine of them are from Missouri. But they are here not so much to be shown as to show us. They demonstrate that Joe Jones, represented by two water colors, is no lonely phenomenon. His candid observation of the world he lives in is no personal idiosyncrasy, but the expression of a growing consciousness of a whole group of mid-western artists, acutely sensitive to their environment and to the social factors which produce it. The names of Joseph Meert, Margaret Mullin, Syd Fossum, George Josimovich, Aimee Schweig, Lawrence Adams, Bernice Singer, and Bob White may be little known in these parts, but they sound a new note in their direct and uncompromising realism. Æsthetically, they are nearer to Grant Wood and Thomas Benton than to the more sensuous and subtle painting of Max Weber. Their marked feeling for illustration and satiric caricature runs parallel to American advertising art, magazine illustration, and the comic strip. This seeming backward æsthetic step gives them a base for real mass popularity. Their paintings belong to a totally different world from that of the regionalists.

Something of the American pioneer spirit imbues these canvases with a harsh integrity; something of puritan tradition lurks in the rejection of sensuous values for literal fidelity to detail. A splendid portrait like that of James B. Turnbull's *Flood Refugee* carves out a new segment of reality akin in feeling to that reality captured by the Soviet films. This portrait of the indomitable grandmother reflects the unflinching pioneer spirit face to face with a tragic contemporary situation. Such depiction of character in plastic terms is utterly American and, at the same time, revolutionary. Nor is this attitude merely personal, for it exists in Tandler's *Blacksmith*

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(although not on the same plastic level), in Joseph P. Vorst's flood pictures, and even in Criss Glasell's spoofing of Grant Wood.

Landscapes like Norman MacLeish's *Illinois Prairie,* Thalinger's *Bum's Hangout,* or Adelyne S. Cross's interesting backyards of Chicago are pervaded by an attitude of revolt rather than the slow sinking into disintegration which Arnold Blanch used to record so consummately. In Charles Allen's black-and-whites, the labor struggle is set down vividly. Certainly this exhibition makes us want to see more from the West. That this new spirit is not isolated in any geographic region, but is rather part of a new awakening in America, is proved by the series of water colors, also at the A.C.A., done by Iva Helford, which vividly record the somber country of Panther Creek Valley in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania. CHARMION VON WIEGAND.

★

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Daylight, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

William Allen White. "Obligations of Democracy." Sat., June 12, 5 p. m., C.B.S.

Unemployment. Dr. Charles Stelzle, director of the Good Neighbor League, Mon., June 14, 6:15 p. m., C.B.S.

Questions before Congress. A representative discusses current issues Wednesdays at 3:30 p. m. and a senator on Thursdays at 5 p. m., C.B.S.

Recent Recommendations

MOVIES

The Last Night. A vivid Soviet film of the night of Oct. 6, 1917.

(We are omitting the listing of recommended American films for the duration of the strike in the Hollywood studios.—THE EDITORS.)

PLAYS

Room Service (Cort, N. Y.). Very funny nonsense about a penniless Broadway showman, ably directed by George Abbott.

Babes in Arms (Schubert, N. Y.). Pleasant and talented cast of youngsters in an amusing, tuneful Rodgers and Hart musical.

Excursion (Vanderbilt, N. Y.). Thunder on the left in comic vein by Victor Wolfson.

Power (Ritz, N. Y.). The Living Newspaper's powerful and amusing attack on the utilities racket.

Professor Mamlock (Daly, N. Y.). Family of German-Jewish physician caught in the maelstrom of the Nazi regime.

THE DANCE

How Long Brethren? and *Candide* (Nora Bayes, N. Y.). Tamiris, José Limon, and other members of the Federal Dance Theatre in two fine performances.

PHONOGRAPH RECORDINGS

Mozart. Gieseking and the Berlin State Opera orchestra give a hitherto unrecorded E-flat major piano concerto (Columbia Set 291).

Beethoven. The Lener Quartet with William Primrose on second viola in a new rendition of the quintet in C-major (Columbia Set 294).

Beethoven. Egon Petri gives a magnificent performance of the F-sharp major piano sonata (Columbia 68939 D).

Nicolai. Beecham presents a fresh slant on the overture to the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Columbia 68938 D).

Handel. Ethel Luening, with flute, harpsichord, and 'cello accompaniment, sings the superb chamber cantata *Nell Dolce Dell' Oblio* (Musicraft).

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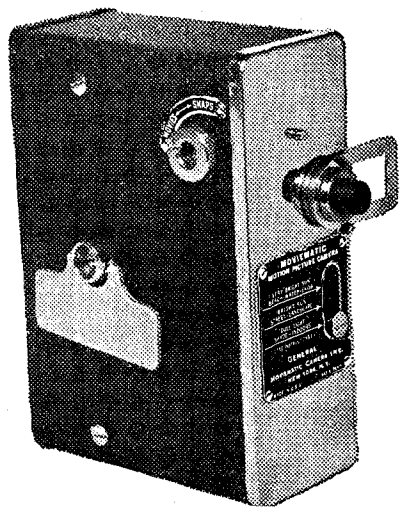

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IN the twenty-five years of its existence, the NEW MASSES has never failed to consult with its readers and friends, known and unknown, whenever its life was in danger. We have always appealed for help to the source of our strength and inspiration. Those whose interests are identical with the broad masses of people must go to the people for the solution of their problems.

In our present hour of need, we again turn in frank, blunt appeal to you. No reader would forgive us—nor could we forgive ourselves—if we failed to give a truthful accounting of our situation at a time when that situation is desperate. That would not be in the tradition of the NEW MASSES.

On April 1, we issued an appeal for $15,000. At that time, we stated that the continued existence of the magazine depended upon the early success of this campaign. Since then, we have held off from raising the alarm as long as we dared. That period is over. As we write, only $5,800 has come into our office in response to our appeal.

The failure of this drive has placed the NEW MASSES in immediate peril. A few fundamental facts will make the causes clear.

In the past two years, our weekly deficit has amounted to around $350. No magazine can show a profit without big commercial advertising accounts. The NEW MASSES lacks these accounts because it cannot be bribed. Its standard is economic and political justice. Big business retaliates not only by political defamation but by attempted economic starvation.

Publishing the NEW MASSES involves bucking this current. The C.I.O. bucks this current in one way, the NEW MASSES in another. We have survived in the past. Why?

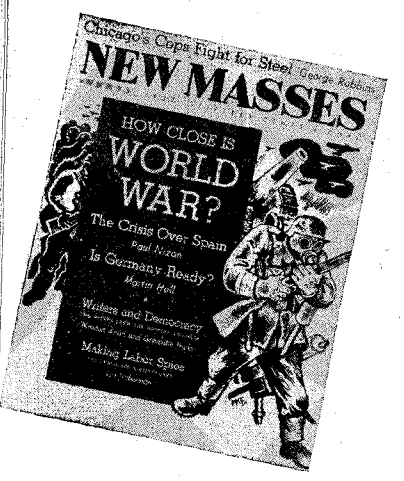
The NEW MASSES has survived only and always because its deficit was made up by friends and readers who happened to have the necessary spiritual and material resources. Our present plight is not due to a falling circulation. It is not due to a falling-off in advertising. It is due primarily to lack of contributions necessary for making up our continuous deficit.

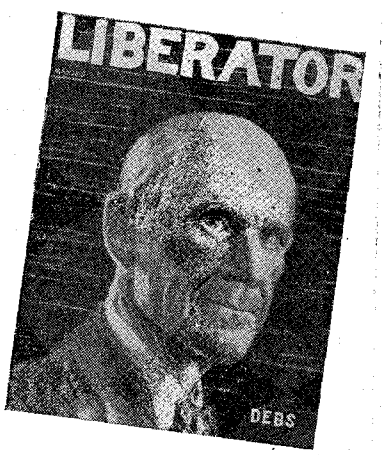
We are aware of the great contributions made by our friends for the Spanish people, the great strike and union organization wave, and similar causes. But many have forgotten that these very causes will suffer if the NEW MASSES does not live and if it does not grow.

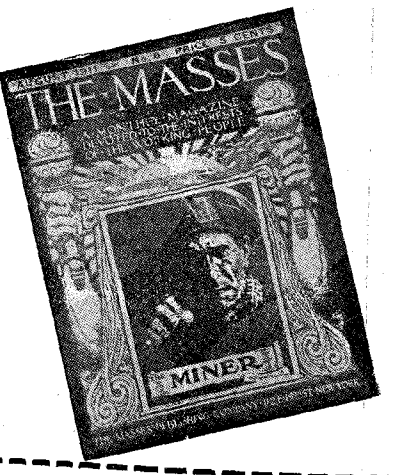
Our job is to rally the masses of middle-class and professional people to the anti-fascist front. In this very issue, our pages are alive with the frightful war alarm arising from the international crisis over Spain. Is it not imperative under these circumstances that the NEW MASSES should survive? Is it not imperative to maintain the one American weekly frankly and consistently devoted to the struggle against fascism and war?

We cannot survive without immediate help. Our problem is not one of weeks. It is one of days.

We need $10,000 immediately. Break this sum down, and our need, in terms of people, is more apparent. If one hundred friends were to wire or mail contributions of $100 each within the next few days, we could straighten our accounts. Two hundred friends with $50 each would save us. One person with $1000 would accomplish one-tenth of the job by himself. And every ten, five and one-dollar bill will push us that much nearer the goal.







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